

bristle

and fig. showing anger or desire to resist:-*pr.p.* bristling. *pa.p.* bristled.-*adj.*

No. 16

Spring/Summer 2004

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Fighting Talk From Bristol and the South West



WARNING



Dangerous When Read

Direct Action Special

From Baghdad to Blackwood...News from the Frontline

bristle is an alternative publication for Bristol and the South West aiming to provide a space and information for local groups and activists. Think locally, act globally, and vice versa. **bristle** invites everyone campaigning locally for different issues to send us your stuff. Contact us if you want to take part. **bristle** is self-funded, and any money made is invested in the magazine and other free-information activities. **bristle** is independent - we don't belong to any party, current or group. People writing for **bristle** don't necessarily agree with all the articles or content of the magazine. **bristle** is committed to creating an alternative media to the local and national brainwashers and manipulators. **bristle** is committed to the distribution of information and to creating revolution and an alternative to capitalism.

bristle

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This is the BPC speaking...

That's **bristle** Publishing Collective, not the BBC.

No political interference here, nor compliance with the blinkered judgements of Masonic members of the British state (Hutton). Just a bunch of fairly committed folks dreaming of a better world – with lots of ideas and examples of how to make it happen.

So welcome to issue 16 of **bristle**. Our numbers have grown; we've changed the layout; we intend to publish quarterly (next issue late June); we're a bit less newsy (see Indymedia, Schnews & Enrager for news), with more comment, features & interviews; we've updated the contacts list; we've worked on improving distro, and have tried to make the mag more accessible by taking it out and about more; there's even a competition! But we've lost the glossy cover for reasons of cost, and the print run is no bigger for the same reason. So we still need your input – written contributions,

graphics, humour, reviews, campaign updates and your comments. Help us with distro too – take out a sub, get the mag sold in local shops & venues, take it to local events. Donations from whatever source are always welcome.

This issue features heavily on direct action (DA), and is a call for this most natural form of resistance to be taken up by ever increasing numbers. DIY DA until collectively we are unstoppable and ungovernable! At a time of ever increasing attacks by New Labour on any semblance of freedom, justice and equality; and the continuing horror in Iraq & Palestine, to name just a few examples, it sometimes feels as if the descent of the planet, and us with it, into complete hell is unstoppable. Yet as this issue shows, there are many ongoing examples of resistance resulting in change for the better. For sure there is a long way to go, as we can see in Bristol itself, but we hope this issue will help some folks realise they are not alone, and that we all have the potential to make a difference.

Collectively that difference can be unimaginably powerful. Let's do it!

*This issue is dedicated to Martin & Paula, two stalwarts of **bristle**, for walking the talk – with congratulations on the birth of their son. Anything is possible!*

Squat Resistance	2
Bayer Hazard	2
Land Matters	3
Mayday 2004	3
Police Attack Free Party	4
Prison Suicides	4
Write Letters To Inmates!	5
Trade Union Solidarity: Bath to Baghdad	5
The Battle Of Blackwood	6-7
Bristling Bath	7
Direct Action Gets the Goods	8-9
Stop Bush Competition	10
Subvertising	11
Bristol Unemployment Riots	12
Free Party Scene	13
DA Snapshot: Anti-capitalism	14
Exter: Bus Strikers Hold Up Stagecoach	14
A Brief History of Direct Action Against GM	15-16
Direct Action and Breaking the Law	17
Direct Action Suffragette Style	18-19

Legal Information for Demos	20
M20: Bristol Actions Against Lies, War and Capitalism	21
Stop Press:	
Bristolian Byelection; Spider Reprieve	21
Al-Muajaha: The Iraqi Witness	22
On The Ground In Iraq: Jo Wilding	23
Act Your Rage! Bristol Anarchist Action	24
Pissed-Off Workers Take Direct Action	
Unionism	25
Broadmead Development: Welcome to the Plunder-Dome	26-27
Fresh & Wild...About Profits	28
Squatter Ignored By Council Shocker	29
The Return of the Bristolian Party	30-31
A Taste Of Freedom	32
Imaginative Dreams	33
Reviews: books, gigs, exhibitions	34-35
Letters	36
Contacts	37

welcome
(ma)CONTENTS

The latter part of 2003 saw a wave of evictions, many squats that were opened didn't last and this led to increasing problems for people, with many ending up sofa surfing. Against this background, a group of people decided that something needed to be done, and squatted disused nurs-

Though the building was eventually retaken the squatters we spoke to feel this was a victory. Resisting the eviction was always primarily a political not a practical act, they told us, resistance brought them the time to ensure nobody was left without a roof over their heads and most importantly it pointed up the failure of Council policy towards squatters and homelessness. One squatter told us that though the Council claim to recognise that there is a 'hidden homeless' problem they don't know how to deal with it, and have no recognition that homeless people are already engaged in their own grass roots self-help solutions. They told us 'the way Council treat squatting as a problem, not a solution doesn't solve the homelessness problem, but does help them make a profit, funny that.'

www.shac.net

Land Matters

A new land co-operative called Landmatters recently started in Devon. Now the group is bringing to life the 'collective vision' which was its inspiration when the co-op bought 42 acres between Totnes and Dartmouth in summer 2003. In order to bring about real social change it is necessary to work on several fronts at once. For direct action to be successful it is best implemented alongside three other broad strategies to create an environmentally sustainable and just society: creating alternative structures and organizations, challenging dominant ideologies and personal change. Landmatters is an example of a group that works primarily on the organizational level but is also an example of the other two. The co-op currently has eighteen members who are putting alternative ideas into practice. Co-operative member, Christian, said:

'Instead of continuously saying "No!" to the madness of globalized corporate capitalism, permaculture and agro-ecological activists also say an enthusiastic "Yes!" to forms of diverse production that break the back of industrial monoculture, strengthen community, increase food security with companion planting and natural pest control strategies, benefit biodiversity and have the potential to generate meaningful employment for many in otherwise disadvantaged rural and urban areas.'

Landmatters are keen to make links locally, nationally and internationally. They would really appreciate input from like-minded folk – whether this in the form of tools and equipment, donations in kind or in cash, skills/wisdom or help with publicity.

For further information or to become a 'Friend of Landmatters' contact:
Landmatters, 53 Westonfields, Totnes, TQ9 5QX. E-mail address: landmatters@speedy-mail.org

Given that this year May 1st falls

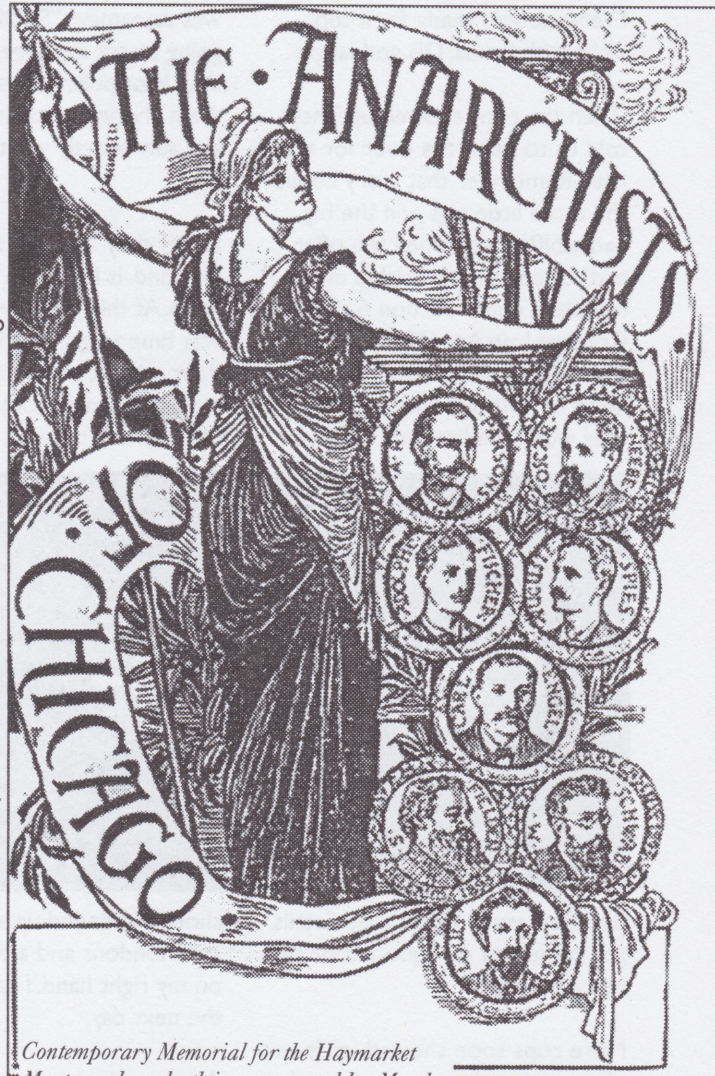
Mayday 2004

on a Saturday, one might be expecting large-scale protests considering the prominence Mayday has gained in recent years.

In London there appears to be no major anti-capitalist protest organised.

Sadly the initiatives of recent years have melted away, with activists concentrating on other issues. People are encouraged to form a bloc on the traditional trade union backed demo, with an anarchist picnic later in the day, and various other autonomous actions are planned. Elsewhere there are planned activities in Dublin, Lancaster, Bradford, Glasgow, with many more small-scale events across the country.

fit gig instead. Other events include a call to meet up on College Green at 11am for some public outreach, and a Bristol Trade Union Council event from 3pm at the Bristol Centre for the Deaf, in Kings Square.



*Contemporary Memorial for the Haymarket
Martyrs whose death is commemorated by Mayday*

Last year in Bristol the New Labour offices in St Pauls were occupied. Given there seems no reason to rush off to London this year, would Bristol big it up this time? A rumoured 4-day Community May Festival has failed to materialise, but who knows what surprises may occur? One publicised event is a mass paper sale to mark the relaunch of the Bristolian news-sheet in the city centre on the morning of May 1. A Radical Walking Tour from Queen Sq, and an attempt to 'dig-down' to free the river Frome, was cancelled and replaced by a Bristolian bene-

May day is an important part of our history of struggle, as well as being a day of frivolity and celebration, and an opportunity to express solidarity with the important battles of the present. So for Mayday, as for every day, link the black, red & green, get out and about, fuck shit up!

For info on the history of Mayday, and recent protests, these sites are a good place to start:

<http://www.ourmayday.org.uk> and
<http://www.urban75.org/mayday03/>

POLICE ATTACK FREE PARTY

By Barry Cades

SAT 13TH DEC...Preparations were underway for a party at the dis-used Sun Alliance building on Dighton Street. The décor was up, giving the place a new lease of life. Everyone was ready for a top night with bands, DJs and laughs.

Then the cops showed up. They told us to open the door for a chat. Remember that story about the three little pigs and the big bad wolf? We declined the offer, and stated our legal rights as squatters under section 6 of the Criminal Law Act (1977). We told them that if they entered with violence or without our consent, they would be breaking the law.

they were yanking out of the door. The whole thing collapsed, trapping the fingers of my right hand. The cops were now in a frenzy and carried on pulling violently. I was screaming, "STOP!! You are going to cut my fingers off!" But they kept pulling, even after one of them shone his torch on my hand, and saw exactly what was happening.

Finally they stopped, and I released my hand. It had been cut to the bone. At this point we all knew it was time to go, so chose the back door option, and escaped a beating. Some mates took me to casualty, and to cut a long story



But they weren't gonna let details get in the way of a good door battering session.

More cops soon showed up. It was obvious that they were not up for talking about it at all. Pretty soon cops in riot gear started smashing in the front door. All things heavy in the building were piled onto a hastily erected barricade. These cops were well pumped up, with faces covered, and no visible I.D. numbers. We had no doubts that if they got in we would all be getting a kicking as an early Christmas present from the state.

For two hours the raver barricaders held off their attack. At just before midnight things took a nasty turn. I saw that they were about to pull the barricade apart, so I grabbed a metal shelf unit that

short, I've ended up with two severed tendons and a broken bone on my right hand. I had surgery the next day.

Anyway, despite my injury and the trauma that comes with it, and the cops' 'success' in shutting down this party, I feel totally proud to have been there with such a solid bunch of people, standing strong against the senseless violence and ignorance of the state. Yeah it was frightening to be on the receiving end of police violence, but we kept up the banter as the cops tired themselves out trying to smash through ('Yer name's not down, you're not coming in!').

Everyone I've chatted with who was there knows how important it was to stick together and resist that night. So when Big Brother

attacks and shit laws make us feel stronger, more together and more determined than ever, he should know he's got trouble.

Our choice of music and preference of organising things for ourselves will not disappear just because the authorities declare it illegal and send in the thugs in uniform to crack a few heads. They should know that by now, but keep wasting money trying to bust us out of existence.

To the free party kidz - keep doin' it! Let's look after each other and when the bad guys turn up, don't take no for an answer!

For the boys from Avon and Somerset Constabulary... my two-finger salute remains intact!

Prison Suicides - blood on Blunkett's hands

On 17 January 2004 Philip Rustell (aged 19) committed suicide in Reading's prison. We have to add this to the deaths last year of five prisoners in the South West and Bristol: John Leslie Sharp (40) and Timothy Birch (30) in Bristol, Paul Baker (42) in Dartmoor, and Clare Parsons (20) in Eastwood Park.

Between December 1998 and January 1999 three suicides happened in Bristol Prison. On 28 May in Dorset Prison, Bristolian James Prosser died after climbing on to the roof. There were a tragic 81 prison suicides nationwide in 2003.

This figure is one of many statistics depicting the failure of the prison system to rehabilitate prisoners, the inhuman conditions of the prison system, and inmates' desperation. These deaths are a consequence of the neglect and lack of care for prisoners, up to 90% of whom suffer from some sort of mental health problem or dependency. >>>

Prison Suicides

(cont'd)

Reports have proved time and again that prison brutality and confinement contribute to prisoners' self-harm and downwards spiral. Prisoner support organisations and prison reformers continue to criticize the prison authorities lack of accountability in these situations.

For legal advice and support for prisoners contact Prisoners Advice Service (PAS) on 0800 018 2156 or check <http://www.prisonersadvice.org.uk/>.

See also the Campaign Against Prison Slavery (CAPS) at <http://www.enrager.net/hosted/caps/>

Write letters to inmates - it's the high point for most prisoners

Imagine going to prison. Maybe it's for something you didn't do. Maybe it's for something you did, but you did it because you believed in something, in fighting for something. You may even have just been being drunk and foolish, but in any case being incarcerated isn't fun, and prisons are the bottom line in the state's control over us. Resisting the prison system is part of challenging the status quo, and supporting those who get caught and imprisoned for their beliefs should be a vital part of any movement too.

War of Attrition

23-hour bang-up might be a handy opportunity to catch up on the latest in The Archers, but ultimately it's designed to isolate you from the world and it's generally not much of a laugh. It's an individual war of attrition to ultimately

A letter a day keeps the blues away...

break you and get you to conform to the rules that are being written on high, whether you agree with them or not. The high point for most prisoners is mail time, and can mean a huge amount, whether a couple of sentences on a card from a stranger or a more long-term correspondence.

Sometimes, it's hard to know what to write and how much to share, but remember that prison life is dead boring, and any news at all is generally going to brighten somebody's day. Try sharing a joke, an anecdote, or a story; it doesn't have to be lengthy or poetic. Just use your sense and don't write about things that are likely to get the prisoner, you or anybody else into trouble, as their mail will usually get read by the screws.

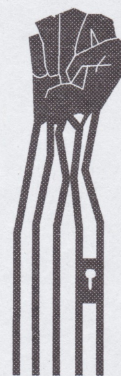
Writing letters can be a laugh, too, if you meet up with a few mates for letter writing sessions or take a card down the pub to get a few people to sign. If you want, you can send stuff too, although what you're allowed to send varies from prison to prison. Tapes are often allowed, so check with the prison first and record a mega-mix of your favourite tunes (although use a see-through tape and maybe leave out that cover version of 'Nelly the Elephant'). Sometimes you can send stamps or stationary, or zines, although books usually have to come from the publisher; check it out with the individual prison.

Don't be offended if the person you write to doesn't write back, they might get a lot of letters of support and can't reply to them all, and there's a limit to the number of stamps somebody on a

few quid a week can afford. Keep the letters coming!

For lists of political prisoners and more information, check out:

UK Earth Liberation Prisoners Support Network, BM Box 2407, London, WC1N 3XX, England.
animalearthliberation@bigfoot.com
<http://www.spiritoffreedom.org.uk>



Trade Union Solidarity from Bath to Baghdad

Bath area trade unionists have expressed their solidarity with their comrades in Iraq. Protests are being co-ordinated following the raid by an armed convoy of US troops on Iraqi trade unionists in December. Local labour activists' angry response has been prompted by a report by the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions:

Dozens of US troops in ten armoured cars raided the IFTU temporary headquarters in Baghdad, smashing windows, seizing documents, and even tearing down posters and banners condemning terrorism. Eight IFTU leaders were arrested, but were released the following day, unharmed. This show of muscle by capitalism's front-line shock troops demonstrates that independent trade unions have no place in 'liberated' (that is to say, occupied) Iraq.

The battle of Blackwood

At the beginning of February an anti-road camp was set up in St. David's woods near Blackwood in south Wales. Activists from Bristol and around the country came to support the community's 11 year old struggle to save the ancient woods, a much valued green space

woodland with protected habitats of bats and dormice facing destruction, and widespread local opposition to the scheme, the council give the green light to the Sirhowy Enterprise Road, and the trashing of St. David's wood. Enter Costain, of Newbury bypass

tunnel was dug in one of them. The camps were named Kerry and Jordan, and campers declared, "We're no celebrities, and you won't get us out of here!". With limited resources, people did the best they could to try and protect as many trees as possible, and to prepare for effective resistance to the inevitable eviction.

Work was stopped on many occasions with some old - school digger - diving direct action tactics. Local teenagers were an inspiration as they relentlessly threw themselves in the way of the machines ripping up their woods. On one occasion a digger driver deliberately drove his vehicle into a line of protestors. It is only by luck that they were not seriously injured or worse. The incident was captured on film. Another day, one man on the receiving end of so-called "reasonable force" had his ribs broken. Security guards and machine operators have been consistently heavy handed with the road resisters. But in the face of violence and threats meted out by increasingly frustrated hired thugs, the kids, learning on their feet (and on their backs!), have showed real courage and determined resistance which looks set to continue. After just six weeks of direct action, Costain were reported to be 4 weeks behind schedule, and Caerphilly council had to hand over another £1.2 million to help cover escalating costs.

Given that work had already started on the road when the actions and camps began, it was a constant battle against time to erect defences ready for the pending eviction. Legal appeals were lodged with the courts on the basis of the protected habitats, but all to no avail. A series of false alarms later, the inevitable happened at 5.30 in the morning of 23rd March. Reportedly, 40 cops and 26 bailiffs entered the camps. As scab climbers from Sheffield prepared to do their dirty work, the sherriff refused to show eviction papers



for the local people.

It's a long story, but one that we've all heard before, albeit with different actors and place names; Business interests persuade Caerphilly county council that there is a pressing need for a new access road to a local industrial estate. One of the companies there is General Dynamics, the largest arms manufacturer in the world - a huge corporation with a bit of influence. Sure enough, the old arguments about prosperity and jobs get reeled out, but most local people aren't taken in. They know it's more about backhanders and no lasting decent employment, as after a year or two the companies miraculously do a disappearing act, relocating to economically sunnier climes. Despite a large amount of nearby industrial units standing empty, with good road access as a viable alternative, the small matter of an ancient

infamy, together with a hugely profitable Private Finance Initiative scheme, and a small army of security goons to deal with any resistance. And the scene is set for the Battle of Blackwood...

For two months people withstood some seriously hardcore Welsh valleys weather conditions to place themselves in the road's way. The basic needs of surviving the torrential rain and bitter cold took up a lot of time and energy for the campers, and without the generosity and friendship of local people coming up with food and dry clothes and bedding, the camps would have undoubtedly struggled to survive. In terms of resistance, activists were largely forced to concentrate on defensive measures, due to a lack of numbers. Walkways and treehouses went up in two bits of woodland due for the chop, and a

and it is likely that the eviction was illegal. Camp Jordan was low on numbers and lost within a few hours. The main battle was for Camp Kerry, spread over Costains Compulsorily Purchased Land and that owned by a sympathetic local magistrate. 5 people managed to get up trees and were later joined by another 2 who breached the security cordon. One guy braved a water - logged tunnel, where he dug in for the day. Lots of local people turned up to protest and act as witnesses to prevent violence from the bad guys.

Throughout the day the resisters got cheers and the bailiffs got abuse from an angry crowd. It took the best part of the day for the overweight and cocky climbers to evict the main group from a suspended cargo net. Shortly afterwards, "Crazy Dai", the tunneller voluntarily emerged due to the risk of hypothermia. One activist refused to let things get him down, and climbed for Wales (up about 50 ft) to avoid being taken. The climbers gave up on him and packed up as light was fading. Arrests were made for breach of the peace, but all were later released without charge.

At time of going to press actions are still continuing against the destruction. Watch out for days of action, or organise one yourself. The resistance is far from finished! Contact 07708 420446 for latest info or check www.bristol.indy-media.org.

The eviction of the camps means that activists can now concentrate efforts on going on the offensive.



Here's a list of companies involved in the trashing:

*Practicality Brown (Chainsaw operators)(based in Banbury and near Slough) 01753 652022 (try various extensions, such as 3 and 6), Fax: 01753 653007

Postal: Practicality Brown Ltd., Iver Stud Nursery, Iver, Bucks. SL0 9LA.
E-Mail: mail@pracbrown.co.uk
other numbers: tel: 01295 690011, Fax: 01295 690022, Fax: 01753 653007

*JPB Tree Felling (Swansea area) 01792 863158, mobile 07967 868901

*Land & Water (massive excavator with megalong grab) Land & Water Services Ltd, Weston Yard, Albury, Guildford Surrey, GU5 9AF Tel: 01483 202733 or 203070
<http://www.land-water.co.uk/>

*Bob Gibbons & associates (based in Blackwood) 01495 226278
mobile 07976 510808 enquiry@bobgibbonsbuilders.co.uk
<http://www.swingthebat.co.uk/bobgibbons/home.html>

*Rochford Landscapers 01702 202 344 - small company based in Southend-on-sea, Essex.

*Costain: Costain House, 18 Lambourne Crescent, Cardiff Business Park, Llanishen, Cardiff, CF14 5GF
Tel: 02920 757755 Fax: 02920 756446 contact: Martyn Walker
more contacts on <http://www.costain.co.uk/contact/civilregion.htm>

*Walters (sub - contractors):
Hirwaun House, Hirwaun Industrial Estate, Hirwaun, Aberdare CF44 9UL
01685 815 100 fax: 01685 815 101 <http://www.walters-group.co.uk/>
swalters@walters-group.co.uk dhursfield@walters-group.co.uk
info@walters-group.co.uk

*Laing O'Rourke: 01322 296200, Bridge Place, Anchor Boulevard, Admirals Park, Crossways, Dartford, Kent, DA2 6SN

*Caerphilly County Borough Council: (01443) 815588 or (01495) 226622, (01443) 875500, info@caerphilly.gov.uk, Text Phone: (01443) 863183.

*Richard Turner Limited (scab climbers who evict protesters from the trees - 101 Coupe Lane, Old Tupton, Chesterfield, tel - 01246 861738 - fax - 01246 863 587 - 1 Lismore Road, Meersbrook, sSHEFFIELD, Yorkshire. Tel: 0114 250 1131 Ask for: Ian Harrison, Paul Newton, or Andrew Coish 66 Rundell Road, SHEFFIELD, Yorkshire Tel: 0114 250 8973 Ask for: Danny Brooks)

Direct Action Gets The

Direct action offers immediate remedy for injustices

The campaign against the Iraq War and the war on terror has generated huge debate about the tactics most likely to succeed. On one side the Socialist Workers Party-dominated Stop The War Coalition leadership has adopted standard pressure group style tactics of lobbying politicians, petitions, meetings, rallies, and 'A to B marches'. On the other supporters of 'direct action' (DA) argue for more militant, confrontational, and sometimes illegal action, such as blockading roads or bases, strikes, occupations, computer activism and sabotage – in effect trying to physically stop the state war machine and its supporters in big business (oil, arms, media and financial corporations).

Ignorance

DA has been taken by large numbers at many locations, such as the thousands at Fairford Air Base and on the streets of Bristol; and by individuals and small groups engaging in property damage, sabotage, subvertising and occupations (see Bristle 14 & 15). The vast majority of these actions have been either unreported, or misrepresented, in the media. However, supporters of DA have not successfully argued for, explained nor publicised their actions to the wider public. As a result, DA is mistakenly seen by some as an activity solely to be undertaken by younger activists acting in secretive groups. This reflects an igno-

rance of the theory and history of DA on all sides, and a failure to understand the vital importance of DA, in its many forms, to any successful campaign – be it a single issue or progressing to revolution.

A recent piece in *Freedom*, the anarchist fortnightly (20 December 2003, page 5) is typical of this problem. Calling for support for a London Earth First group, the writer says: "We need to reclaim DA... [and] be honest about what we call DA. DA

should be distinct from other forms of protest, including civil disobedience... Standing outside a building is a picket no matter how many vans of riot cops it attracts." In the context of ecological resistance this attitude may be necessary to separate from the professional, highly paid, careerist campaign groups, and the success of EF! and related campaigns is to be applauded. But its implication that, say, picketing miners 20 years ago were not engaging in DA, is both divisive and wrong. It is indicative of the apparent belief of some activists that DA was only invented yesterday. By appearing to narrow DA down to being solely a militant and violent activity, it reduces the likelihood of larger numbers engaging in DA. It reinforces the sensation that DA is a specialist, almost élitist, activity unavailable to most. Whilst this specialism & level of militancy is necessary for some highly successful and effective actions, our aim should be for this to be the

exception, not the rule. Because in fact DA has proved to be the most natural response over the centuries for everyone, be they defending or attacking!

A potent weapon

In essence DA means taking action ourselves to defend and improve the quality of our lives

supporters of DA have failed to properly argue for, explain, or publicise their actions to the wider public.

and the world around us, independent of political parties, hierarchies, and charities. Those using DA aim to either obstruct another person/organization from performing something objectionable, and/or act with whatever resources and methods are within their power, either on their own or as part of a group, in order to solve problems. This method and theory is direct in that it seeks immediate remedy, by ourselves, to what is wrong, as opposed to indirect tactics, such as electing someone who promises to provide a remedy at some later date. Relying on others to resolve our problems is disempowering. DA empowers, and is based on mutual aid, solidarity and collective action. It is self-organised, rejecting hierarchies. It must also acknowledge and respect each individual's limits, according to their personal circumstances. DA is the most natural and easily accessible weapon available to us, and can be utilised in all aspects of our lives – from making roads

Goods



safer for our kids, and looking after friends and neighbours; to stopping wars, creating our own media, and forming networks of resistance. This spells out the differences between Stop the War Coalition leaders, and those who take DA. They seek to both control our protests, and appeal to elected reps to resolve the problems. We recognise that the only way to stop the madness of the bosses and politicians is by unleashing our most potent weapon – direct action! This can include meetings, rallies and marches, providing they are self-organised and occur outside the hierarchical straightjacket.

A little history

The words 'direct action', and the theory behind it, were first articulated in the context of workers struggles in the late 19th century. The Russian anarchist Voline, active in the Russian Revolution of 1917 and later persecuted by the Bolsheviks for resisting their totalitarian practices, was an early such theorist. His biographer Rudolph Rocker, the German anarcho-syndicalist, put it this way in the late 1930's: "By direct action we mean every method of immediate warfare by the workers against their economic and political oppressors: the strike, from simple wage struggle to general strike; the boycott; sabotage in its countless forms; anti-militarist propaganda; and in critical cases, such as Spain, armed resistance of the people for the protection of life and liberty." Daniel Cohn-Bendit, student leader in Paris, May 1968, noted in his book

Obsolete Communism: The left wing alternative, that: "Recourse to direct action changed the whole tenor of the struggle, for the workers' self-confidence is enormously increased once they act without delegating any of their power to political parties or trade unions". The irony of Cohn-Bendit of course is that he subsequently switched sides, like many so-called student radicals. So remember to never have leaders, never mind trust them!

From the late 1950's onwards, in the west at least, the term 'direct action' became increasingly associated with struggles outside of the workers' movement. This is partly because workers conditions had greatly improved (although this is being reversed) and they became more docile, but largely because those involved were outside of the traditional labour force. Struggles such as civil rights, anti-racism, the peace, women's and environmental movements, all employed DA in increasingly imaginative ways. Influenced heavily by the thinking of the likes of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, their DA was often consciously non-violent (NVDA), in response to the destructive practises they opposed, and sought to achieve the moral high ground. Here's King in 1959: "I became deeply

fascinated by Ghandhi's campaigns of non-violent resistance...I came to feel that this was the only morally and practically sound method open to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom." King was assassinated, and practioners of NVDA frequently face violent repression. Those who seek to maintain power and control over us and our world, display no morals when faced with a challenge to their power. No matter what flowery words the modern spin doctors may employ, our rulers will always revert to the 'iron fist' approach when opposition needs to be crushed.

It is not the purpose of this piece to debate violence versus non-violence, as they are but tools in the DA toolbox. It is only when they become ideologies that they become a problem. This issue of *Bristle*, like those before it, reports widely on all forms of DA, with the aim of extending its use by demonstrating both its potency and its liberating impact on our lives. Go forth and use it – DA all the way!

More on DA

The following are starting places for investigating the theory & practice of DA further:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Direct_action

<http://www.enrager.net/organise>

<http://www.schnews.org.uk/diyguide/>

Direct Action and Liberal Democracy
by April Carter (Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1973)



direct action special

Its yer Bristle DA competition: Stop Bush!

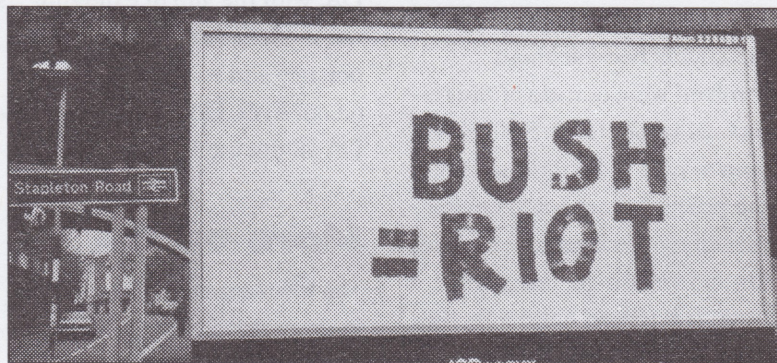
Yep, your lovely *Bristle* Editorial Collective, beaver away in our bomb-proof bunker beneath the Kebele building, have gone all generous, and will give to the winner of this sinister competition a year's free sub (four issues); a bag of goodies from our extensive political collection; and print the winning submission in the next issue.

So what's the story?

That's up to you. In line with our Direct Action special feature, we want you to write a fictional(!) 500-word press release/article, that you would send to Indymedia's newswire, based on the action you have taken outlined in the scenario below. Explain what you've done and why (practice and theory). The winning entry will be the one the Collective considers the most likely to have succeeded. You'll lose marks if you got nicked, or if we can't make sense of what you've written. A London A-Z may help, or use www.streetmap.co.uk/. Get those fantasies written down now!

The scenario!

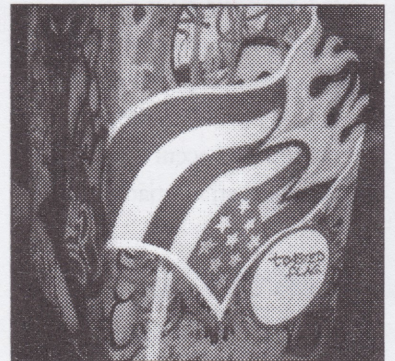
Remember Bush's London visit last November, and the big Thursday demo which achieved absolutely nothing? Well that evening Bush (and his armoured cavalcade) went to a banquet at the US Ambassador's residence inside



Regents Park. Nearest tube was Baker St. A bunch of us went too. The Ambassadors pad could be approached by road from three directions; from Hanover Gate, or from north or south along the Outer Circle. The residence was just inside the park, close to the junction of these roads (a stone's throw from the Central London Mosque!). Only a few cops were at the tube station; As we walked north along the Outer Circle there were none to be seen until you were very close to the aforementioned road junction, where there loads – armed, riot and yellow jackets. The Outer Circle approaching the junction was dark, with little streetlighting, and trees, bushes and hedges on each side. There was a 6ft chain-link fence on the park side of the road. Unfortunately, in trying to establish which direction Bush would come from, we were seen and escorted under armed guard into a pen. There were only five other protesters there. You, however, have the benefit of hindsight. You know Bush will be coming along the dark Outer Circle travelling north from Baker St. Your affinity group is crouching unseen in the dark, 200m from the police blockade at the aforementioned road junction. Now go to work!

To enter

Send your submission by email to editors@bristle.org.uk or by post to Box 25 at Greenleaf Books, by 15th June 2004. We won't print the winners real name and address unless you want us to, but you'll have to give us a contact so we can get your prize to you!



direct history I

The Bristol Bridge Riots, 1793

1

The tolls on Bristol Bridge were much resented by the poor. When the promised abolition of toll collection failed to take place, people made good bonfires from the toll-gates. When magistrates and militia arrived they were jeered at and pelted. The militia opened fire, killing one man. Two days later the mob was back, clashing with soldiers. 11 rioters were killed and 45 injured. That night the council house and the Guildhall were attacked by an angry crowd. Soon afterwards the tolls were abolished.

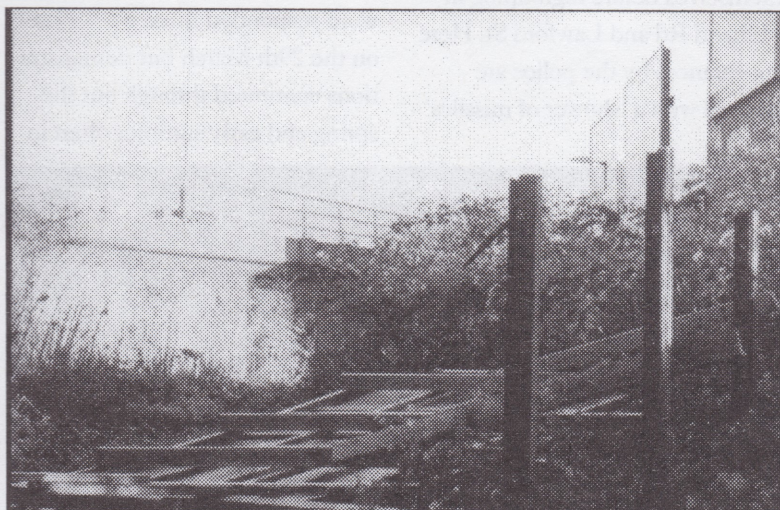
Subvertising



Subvertising is playful sabotage. It is a spanner in the works of the mass-advertising industry, a response to the corporate take-over of our space, and our minds. It is a rejection of mass consumerism – and mass hypnosis. It is an attack on the destructive industries behind the endless billboard facades. It means turning the tables, and using

letters or re-worked graphics to change the message, there are so many ways of answering back. Then there's always a good saw, as a means of relieving 'Billboredom'. A local group calling itself 'Anti-Billboard Brainwash Action' (ABBA) has recently reported job satisfaction after a series of billboard-felling outings in Bristol.

FFI: Graphic Attack, subverted Bristol Billboards:
<http://web.onetel.net.uk/~jeffbr/subverts.htm>



the bad guys' own weapons against them – at their expense. It is also a right good laugh – a healthy mix of politics and pleasure.

The targets are not hard to find – billboard bombardment is everywhere. Our options for billboard improvement are similarly endless, and only limited by our imagination. From the simple spray-paint response or the paint-bomb splatter effect, to the subtle use of printed



Subvertising can be practiced by:

Affinity groups make DA easier!

- These are small groups acting together with a common purpose.
- They look out for and support each other.
- They may be friends who act together regularly.
- They may have got together for the one action.
- Each person will know their role within the group.
- Tasks can be shared out within the group.

direct action special

The Bristol Unemployment Riots

Bristol police provocation in the depression riots

February 9th 1932 - The Great Depression rages across the world, and Bristol, like many cities, had large numbers of unemployed workers. Beset by the inequities of the means test many lived in conditions of dire poverty, their families lacking basics such as shoes and coats. Now the unemployed faced a new threat: Bristol City Council was attempting to cut the scale of the Poor Law relief. Many believing that this was the final straw that would push them over into starvation, 2,000 unemployed Bristolians gather for a mass meeting then attempt to march on the Council House, then in Corn St to deliver a deputation to the Council Meeting their numbers rising to 4,000. They never make it - the police divert the crowd into Old Market St and immediately baton charge the crowd attacking men and women alike, two people receive head wounds. The crowd re-assembles in the Horsefair and skirmishes continue all afternoon. Stones are thrown as people grow angry at the police treatment of the crowd. Later in the day the police arrest a number of perceived 'ring leaders' and proceed to fit them up for the violence, despite witnesses who insist they took no part in the trouble. As one of them, Edward Dyer, is led away in court he shouts 'If this is justice I'm done'.

Baton Charge

Two weeks later on 23rd February, 3,000 unemployed gather in the Horsefair in another attempt to send a deputation to the Council to argue their case. Their numbers reach 10,000 by the time they reach Old Market St. Here, by Shepard's Hall (the HQ of the National Unemployed Workers Movement) they find their way blocked by a double line of police. As the crowd attempts to move forward the police baton charge them once more. This time the unemployed are prepared and sections of the crowd begin to fight back with 'thick sticks and lengths of gas pipe' (*Western Daily Press* 24th Feb, 1932). After the attack people race down the main road, raiding coal carts to arm themselves before regrouping in Midland Rd and Lawford St. Here appearances by the police are greeted with a 'shower of missiles'

(WDP) to be met by more baton charges. Trouble continues for another 1½ hours, 30 people are injured and the police are forced to surround the Council House to defend it.

Blood on the Council's Hands

On the 8th March, the deputation was finally allowed to meet the council. 5,000 march peacefully to the council demanding an end to cuts and the hated means test. In a speech delivered to the council one of them warned: 'There can be trouble and there will be trouble as long as these cuts operate... on the hands of every council member is the blood of every man and woman knocked down in Old Market Street'. The relief cuts were suspended three weeks later on the 29th March but demonstrations continued through out the spring and early summer often in

direct history 2

The Reform Bill riots, 1831



The poor of Bristol hoped the Reform Bill would get them better representation, giving more people the vote. Charles Wetherall was recorder for Bristol, and extremely unpopular for his dismissive arrogance towards Bristolians, and his opposition to the Bill. He visited Bristol on 29th October. Large crowds were waiting. Insults and stones flew, forcing him to hide in the Mansion House on Queen square. The mob attacked, looted and torched the Mansion House. Wetherall had to escape, in disguise, over the rooftops. The wine cellars of the much hated Corporation provided the crowds with much merriment as the contents, about 7,000 bottles of wine, were made public property. All three of Bristol's squalid jails were torched, and prisoners freed. Many danced naked through the streets. Next the Bishop's Palace was trashed and fired as rioters carried off his wine stash. The Bishop had also opposed the Reform Bill. The Customs house and 50 other houses in Queen square were plundered and burnt. After 3 days of mob rule, soldiers finally restored order. It is estimated that 250 were killed, including many bystanders. 127 were arrested and 4 men were hanged.

support of those arrested at earlier demonstrations. Contemporary records show the prosecution alleging that speeches were given that consisted 'of a most filthy and vulgar abuse of the police force and similar abuse of the Royal Family', saying 'In the last week or so there has been a tendency... to suggest to the crowd... that they should take matters into their own hands and if they should want anything they should break open shop windows and take whatever they want' (*Bristol Observer* 23rd April 1932).

Indiscriminate Attacks

9th June 1932 should go down as a black day in the history of Bristol, for it was on this day that the police decided to seek their revenge on a militant movement prepared to defend itself against attack. A crowd of between 400 and 600 people marched peacefully up Castle St that evening accompanied by no more than three or four policemen when, in the words of a Council member who investigated the incident, they were 'ambushed with pre-meditation and without provocation, and driven back onto a body of police waiting with batons drawn to strike them down'. Eyewitness reports tell of police hiding in side streets and doorways before attacking men and women, demonstrators and passersby alike indiscriminately. 28 people suffered injuries that night, many of them a result of blows to the head, though there were no police injuries or arrests. Such was the outrage at the incident at the time that a special council meeting was called to investigate the incident. All the contemporary accounts point to one thing: a deliberate attack by the police out to provoke. History repeats itself, now and then.

Lock up your daughters, the munters are coming to town!

The Bristol free party scene has been alive and kicking for years, with a big crowd of people putting on parties for no profit, just for the love of having a laugh. Having control of your own space instead of putting it in the hands of bouncers and night club owners is a pretty powerful thing and gives party-goers a sense of ownership over the party they're at. The party becomes what you and all your other mates can make of it.

Recently, the cops have been trying to close down a few free parties in Bristol, and although they've succeeded a couple of times, there's plenty of times they haven't. Generally it's pretty chilled but sometimes the forces of darkness descend, determined that nobody's having any fun tonight, although usually in the spirit of the munt, people tend to have a laugh anyway. In December a couple of parties got closed down by the law, systems got impounded, then recovered, but the Bristol party scene continues.

Parties are usually held in squatted

venues or in the countryside on squatted land. Often they're in warehouses or other disused industrial buildings. The thing to remember when you're doing your own thing outside of the law is that nobody else is going to be there to sort your shit out, so it's about taking responsibility for yourself. It's a simple case of anarchy in action, which isn't necessarily about chaos (unlike that tenth can of beer), and that's usually why the powers that be don't like it, because they're not in control, we are.

Parties are generally advertised word-of-mouth to avoid too much Babylon interest, so look out for party phone numbers and listen out for top tips from your mates about upcoming events, as well as the muffled sound of bass beats from the industrial estate next door; and remember, the party's what you make it!

Check out <http://www.urban75.com> for a bit more info and links on this and loads of other things. Remember you can use the internet for free in the library if you haven't got it at home.



direct action special

DA Snapshot: Anti-Capitalism

Anti-capitalists: what do they do?

The very loose network of groups and individuals making up the modern anti-capitalist movement came to prominence in the late 1990s, and can be credited with re-introducing the word capitalism back into daily use after years of absence. Anti-capitalists can be distinguished from the mis-named anti-globalisation movement by the fact that the former wants to abolish capitalism, whilst the latter merely seeks to reform it. As both movements are often present at the same events, they can be easily confused, but the anti-capitalists are the more likely to take confrontational, sometimes violent, direct action.

Tactics

Anti-capitalists use both violent and non-violent tactics, depending on their viewpoints, and on the situation. This diversity of – but respect for – different tactics, often results in them selecting different targets or routes at anti-capitalist protests. The NVDAs are often associated with the pink or silver blocs/actions and tactical frivolity, with dancing, samba bands, and fancy dress. Those associated with property damage and violent confrontation with cops, bosses and politicians are sometimes called the black bloc. Often though the two mix together.



Anti-capitalists march, blockade, occupy and sabotage; try to encircle and/or stop capitalist meetings and summits; attack banks and other big corporations, and sometimes riot. They do this at big, set-piece events, and on a day-to-day basis. They can be surprisingly well organised, and produce all sorts of propaganda and tat. The anti-capitalists recent roll call of honour includes J18, Seattle 99, Prague 2000, various Maydays in London – elsewhere, Genoa 2002, and just about any city where the IMF, World Bank, WTO, G8, EU and similar are meeting. Look out for them at the G8 meet in the UK in 2005.

Ideas for effective DA at both mass events and small actions

- Don't act alone. Pairs or small groups are best.
- Know the local geography, and know your target.
- Understand clearly what you are doing, and why, and be prepared to accept the consequences.
- Be aware of what's going on around you, keep an eye on cops/security, keep an escape route open if you do not want to be arrested.
- Know your legal rights and who to contact if arrested.
- Have sufficient food & drink, and medication if needed.
- Do not carry unnecessary items, info, personal phone no's or ID.
- Dress appropriately.
- Publicise your action during & after (where appropriate), explaining why you did the action (you may want to do this anonymously). Make your own news!

A BRIEF HISTORY OF DIRECT ACTION AGAINST GM

Local groups and coalitions hold a multi-million dollar industry at bay

The GM campaign has been one of the most successful ecological resistance movements ever, holding a multi billion-dollar industry at bay in Britain for over five years now, and proving that a handful of grassroots campaigners really can change the world.

Direct action has had a significant part to play in the process, from the initial alerting of consumers, to the decontamination of sites threatened by GM pollution. Although Greenpeace were technically the first to take public action on the issue- by pointing out the contaminated nature of a shipment of soya in '96, it has otherwise been independent groups and local coalitions which have lead the way in responding to the technology and innovating tactics to counter it.

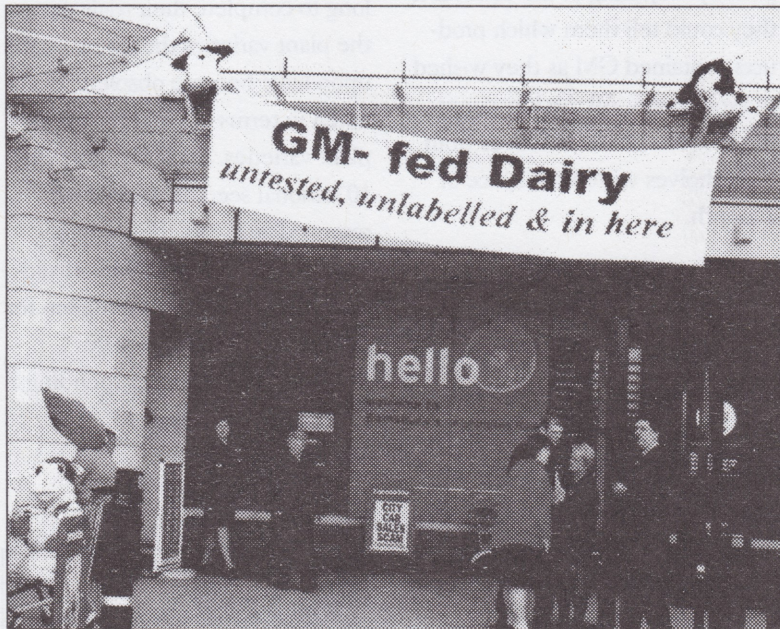
The growing of crops in open trial sites has always been an obvious target, because plant destruction prevents further contamination of the area, slows up the process that leads to commercialisation, and undermines biotech profits. The first trial to be covertly decontaminated in the UK was a trial of GM potatoes removed by aliens in '97 (according to the press release).

Snowball

During '97 the Snowball campaign accountably removed a limited number of GM plants

and tried to encourage a mass movement of open civil disobedience to the technology. While the method of notifying everyone (including the police) prior to an action infuriated many in the direct action community, and ensured that very little actual decontamination was achieved, the media platform it created for campaigners set a useful image in the public mind for the years to come.

submitting expert evidence which proved that they had 'lawful excuse' for removing the crop (because it threatened another's property) all charges were dropped. From then until now, and after dozens of similar cases, only one instance of crop trashing has resulted in a guilty verdict.



Hung out to dry: cows take action at Exeter Sainsbury's, Spring 2004

Meanwhile, an organic farm that was threatened with cross-pollination from a neighbouring trial of GM maize was protected by 20 people who destroyed the test plot just before it was due to pollinate. 2 women were arrested and charged with ½ million pounds worth of criminal damage, the first arrests for decontamination in England. After 9 months on bail and after

In Norfolk a site was decontaminated and replaced by a land occupation demonstrating permaculture gardening. All of which coincided with the breaking media furore over investigations by a scientist called Dr Arpad Pushti, who was concerned about the health effects of GM potatoes he observed in his lab rats.

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>> A BRIEF HISTORY OF DIRECT ACTION AGAINST GM (contd.)

Frankenstein Food

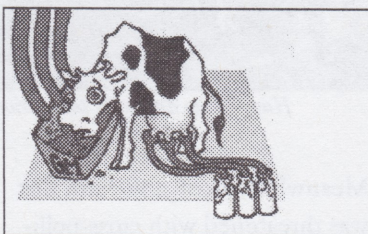
With thousands of consumers fearing another BSE, and the tabloids full of 'Frankenstein food' headlines, dozens of local groups started going into supermarkets to hand out leaflets and hang banners; others stuck labels on products. 'Ethical shoplifting' took place, with people filling up shopping trolleys with contaminated food, and walking out of the store to the police station, where they reported the produce as a biohazard. Others organised trolley teams that blocked each checkout, politely enquiring of the cashiers if they could tell them which products contained GM as they wished to avoid them. All the key supermarkets removed GM foods from their shelves within the space of a month.

In the face of this the government announced that there would be a 'voluntary moratorium' from the industry on the commercial growing of GM while 'farmscale trials' were done to test how the spray regimes that accompanied the new herbicide resistant crops would affect wildlife.

This resulted in a number of mass daylight rallies, from communities who went on steep learning curves after discovering that their neighbourhoods were about to host a trial. Several of the many hundreds of public meetings resulted in the organisation of public rallies, like the one at Watlington in Oxford: over 600 people met in a sunny field in front of police to hear speeches and then, politely and calmly, donned white paper decontamination suits and walked

onto the field of GM oilseed rape and demolished it. After that, large daylight demos became a spontaneously annual event, inspiring many people who had never previously politically engaged to do 'criminal' damage.

However, the farmscale trials were unimportant in comparison with the 'national seedlisting trials' smaller tests that have to be completed before a new variety can be commercialised. These were generally targeted by smaller groups that worked at night. In around five years of these decontaminations, no-one has ever been caught removing the crops, and sufficient numbers of trials have been halted to seriously delay commercialisation. 6 varieties of GM crops were recently pulled from the 'national seed list' because they took so long to complete their trials that the plant varieties they were based upon have become obsolete, overtaken in terms of yield by ordinary plant varieties. Similarly, after all 10 national seed list trials were removed last year, the company that promotes them, Bayer, decided to stop their testing program for the indefinite future on the grounds that they were spending a lot of money and not getting results.



Animal Action

However, GM crops are still entering the food chain through animal feed. Over 80% of GM crops grown globally are for animal fodder, and the dairy and meat products that come from animals raised on them are unlabeled. As the first GM crop due for commercialisation in the

UK is a kind of fodder maize for cattle, it was clearly important to stop that market before it started. This resulted in an Earth First conference, where it was decided for the first time to do a coordinated national action, focusing on Supermarket depots. The idea was that if one supermarket, say ASDA, was focused upon, and lost serious revenue because goods could not leave their storage depots, then they would bow to public opinion and their competitors would follow suit. This tactic proved embarrassingly effective, when mere days before the actions were due to take place ASDA announced that it would be phasing out animal feed. The action was quickly revised to target Sainsburys instead. 6 depots were blocked by people using bike locks and arm tubes to attach themselves to lorries in their entrances. Many blockades held for several hours. A week later Sainsburys announced a phase out policy.

Unfortunately, the dairy aisles are still full of products that come from animals fed on GM feed, and action is desperately needed. Once again people are going into supermarkets and labelling, informing and generally encouraging other consumers to put pressure on managers. The government hopes to commercialise GM in 2005. If the supermarkets aren't prepared to buy the products that come from GM crops then the industry really will fail in the UK.

Stop press: Bayer have withdrawn the only GM crop with partial approval for growing in the UK, Chardon LL maize. See:

www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2004/03/288257.html

If you want to start taking action on this issue, and want more information or support, please contact the Totnes Genetix Group on 01803 840098 or look at www.togg.org.uk

Direct Action and Breaking the Law

A lot of direct action can take place within the law, but this is not always the case. There are so many laws designed purely to protect property and the interests of the powerful. Governments and corporations use laws to ensure "business as usual", i.e. destruction and genocide on a massive scale. Any serious attempts to challenge the workings of the system or bring about lasting change will come up against the law sooner or later. The already vast array of laws at the disposal of the authorities to keep us in line grows ever longer. Laws, and the threat of punishment have always been used to intimidate us into 'staying out of trouble'. But hey, we all know that rules are just made to be broken anyway.

We don't have the space here to give full details of the many laws that can be used against people taking direct action. What follows is just a brief summary, and a starting point for further reading. If you are preparing to take direct action, it's important to know a bit about the relevant laws. Cops often abuse their legal powers, relying on our ignorance. Information is a weapon, and getting clued up can help you avoid getting locked up.

But at the end of the day... the law is an ass! Don't let it get in the way! Here's some we broke earlier:

Trespass offences, Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994:

Failure to leave squatted land (§ 61)

Aggravated trespass (§ 68)

Failure to leave land after a warning (§ 69)

Trespassory assemblies (§§ 70-71)

Public order offences

Public Order Act 1986

Public processions and public assemblies (§§ 11-16)

Harassment, alarm or distress (disorderly conduct) (§ 5)

Intentional harassment, alarm or distress (§ 4A)

Fear of violence (§ 4)

Affray (§ 3)

Violent Disorder (§ 2)

Riot (§ 1)

Obstruction of the highway (§ 137, Highways Act 1980)

Breach of the peace (1361 - "The peasants are revolting!"; a good un' for tyrants throughout the ages!)

Obstructing a police officer (§ 51, Police Act 1964)

Obstructing the Sheriff (§ 10, Criminal Law Act 1977)

General police powers:

Stop and search etc (Police and Criminal Evidence Act

(PACE) 1984)

Criminal damage/arson/going equipped (§1, Criminal Damage Act 1971)

GBH/ABH (Offences Against The Persons Act 1861)

Assault (§ 39, Criminal Justice Act 1988)

Assault Police (§51, Police Act 1964)

Picketing (§241, Trade Unions and Labour Relations Act 1992 - one of Thatcher's anti-union laws)

Harassment (§1, Protection from Harassment Act 1997 - a law supposedly to deal with stalkers, but used first on activists)

Theft/burglary/going equipped (§1/9/para. 6, Theft Act 1968)

Conspiracy (Criminal Law Act 1977)

Incitement.

For more useful legal information for direct action, contact:

FREEBEAGLES -
www.freebeagles.org.uk

LEGAL DEFENCE AND MONITORING GROUP - www2.phreak.co.uk/ldmg Tel. 0208 2452930

ACTIVISTS' LEGAL PROJECT -
www.activistslegalproject.org.uk Tel. 01865 243772

DOUGLAS and PARTNERS - (local firm) Tel. 9552663

BINDMAN and PARTNERS - (good solicitors specialising in defending activists) Tel. 0207 8334433

IRWIN MITCHELL (specialists in suing the police) Tel. 0114 2767777

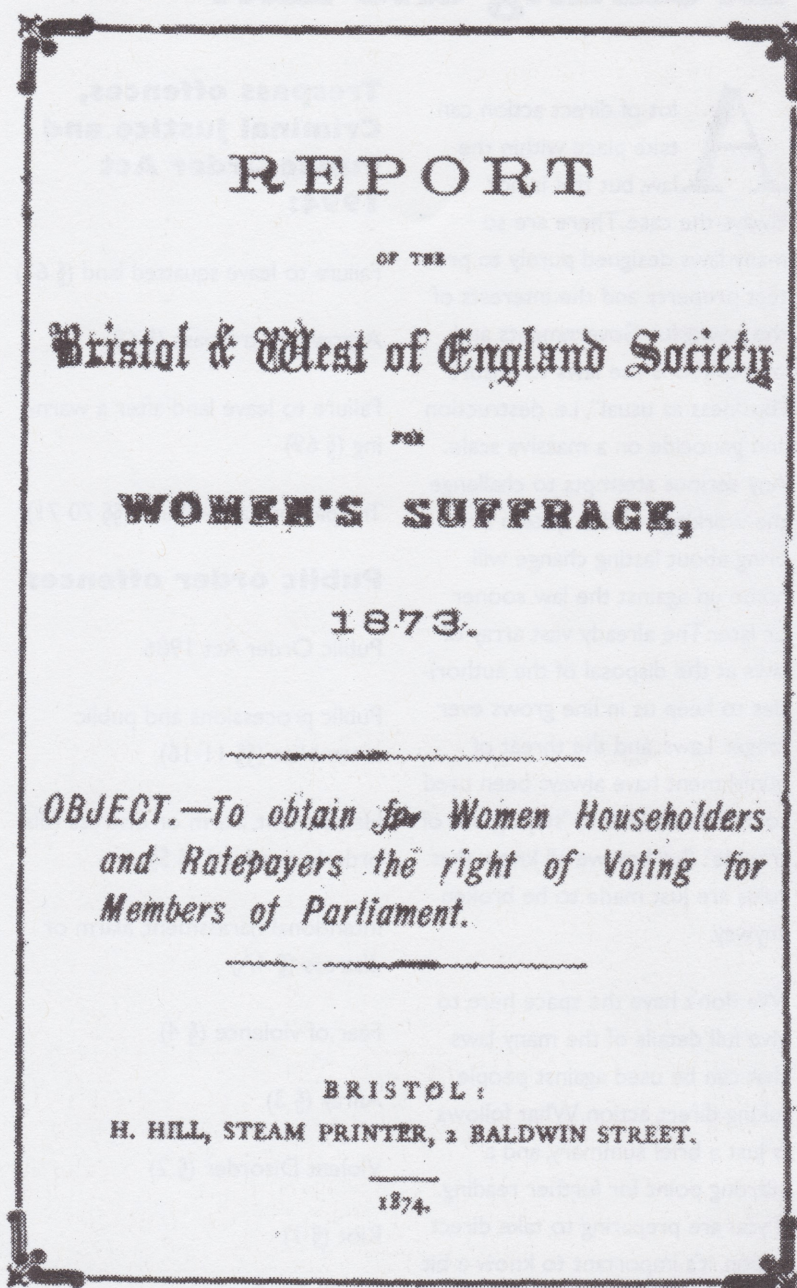
direct action special

Churchill Horsewhipped on Bristol Station: Direct Action Suffragette Style

Local suffragettes used a diverse range of direct-action tactics in their sustained struggle for the franchise before World War I. They were aware of their place in Bristol's agitational tradition and suffragette propaganda noted the part that the infamous franchise riots of 1831 had made in breaking the aristocratic stranglehold upon political life. Emmeline Pankhurst recalled:

The extensions of the franchise to the men of my country have been preceded by very great violence... In 1832 we were on the edge of a civil war and on the edge of revolution... it was after the practice of arson on so large a scale that half the city of Bristol was burned down in a single night, it was because more and greater violence and arson were feared that the Reform Bill of 1832 was allowed to pass into law. ('Why We are Militant', 1913)

A Women's Suffrage Society was founded in Bristol in 1868. For the next 40 years suffragists used constitutional methods to pursue women's right to vote in Parliamentary elections – to no avail. Frustration at this lack of progress led to the foundation of the Women's Social and Political Union in 1903. This marked the start of more militant campaigning and the appearance of 'suffragettes' willing to take increasingly confrontational actions to force the issue with the British state.



Megaphone Militancy

Until 1913 the suffragettes mostly voiced their demands through public meetings and mass rallies. They also disrupted and stormed meetings addressed by government ministers and anti-suffrage candidates, or heckled them from strategic places in the audience. In 1909 W.P.S.U. members successfully hijacked a speech by Bristol M.P. Augustine Birrell, in the

Colston Hall. Women were excluded from the venue so suffragettes disrupted proceedings with a megaphone by hiring premises immediately next door. Two women, Vera Holme and Elsie Howey, hid in the Colston Hall organ for several hours and leapt out to harangue and embarrass the hapless Birrell half-way through his speech. (Raeburn, *Militant Suffragettes*, pp. 97-98) In the same year, Marion Dunlop's hunger strike was the first instance of a protest tactic

that was to become closely identified with the suffragettes. Winston Churchill was a leading 'Liberal' who earned much hatred by presiding over the violent force-feeding of suffragette hunger strikers. Sylvia Pankhurst records that Theresa Garnett 'struck Winston Churchill with a riding switch in the Great Western Station, Bristol and with others arrested that day was forcibly fed' (*Suffragette Movement*, 1931, pp. 328-29). Lloyd George was also heavily heckled when he addressed a meeting in Bath in 1911.

Betrayal

Suffragettes became increasingly incensed by the perceived

two well-known local wrestlers for personal protection (Raeburn, *Militant Suffragettes*, 1973, p. 63). Militant actions included threats to sabotage the Saltford Regatta in 1913 by burning the boats. While this was not carried out such threats were not idle – the University of Bristol's Sports Pavilion, was burnt down later that year. Both were regarded as bastions of upper-class patriarchy.

Sylvia Pankhurst discusses many of the issues raised by direct action in her powerful political memoir, *The Suffragette Movement*. Opinion divided upon lines that are now familiar, for example in the anti-capitalist movement. Do individual acts of sabotage amount to an

individualistic, even élitist, approach that distracts from the task of building an inclusive mass movement or do they inspire greater numbers of people to participate in acts of rebellion? Finally, those that argue that voting should be made compulsory because of the suffragettes' struggle to win the franchise overlook Sylvia Pankhurst. Commenting on the fortunes of early women M.P.s during the 1920s she stated:

'One should not expect to find new policies on any subject springing up from Parliament; the atmosphere there is arid, the life stultifying to thought... Parliament is a decaying institution: it will pass away with the capitalist system'.



Bristol University Students wreck the Park Street headquarters of Bristol Suffragettes, 1913

betrayal of Asquith's government which appeared to be reneging on delivering women's suffrage. An intensification of the struggle followed in the form of window-smashing, arson, pillar-box firing and picture slashing. Bristol was a major centre of suffragette activity. Meetings, lectures and door-to-door canvassing took place across the city and several suffragettes were imprisoned in Horfield Prison. Suffragette campaigns often provoked violent controversy – Annie Kenney was compelled to hire

direct history 3

St. Paul's riot, 2 April 1980

Sparked off by a police raid on the Black & White café. The café was important to the local black community. Tensions were already high, with a lot of simmering anger about police harassment and discrimination. Young black youths started bricking the police, and were joined by white youth until a crowd of about 2,000 confronted the outnumbered cops. Police were forced to withdraw from the area, and only regained control 3 – 4 hours later. There was widespread looting and over £1/2m damage to property, including a bank. 134 arrests were made, mostly resulting in fines. Trouble flared again in the courts as youths fought police. A punitive riot trial aimed at setting an example collapsed. St. Paul's had become a symbol of resistance, showing that black people could fight back.



LEGAL INFORMATION FOR DEMOS!

General

- Unless driving a vehicle, under arrest, or they intend to summon you to court, you **DO NOT** have to give your name and address to the police.

- You do not have to talk to the police at any time, you can just walk away!

- If an officer has 'reasonable suspicion' that you may be carrying drugs, offensive weapons, or stolen property, they may search outer clothing.

- If the police touch you unnecessarily it is common assault.

If Arrested

- Stay calm - let people around you know you're being arrested.

- Note the number(s) of your arresting officer(s) if possible.

- You must be told the reason why you are being arrested and cautioned: "you do not have to say anything, but it may harm your defence if you do not mention anything that you later rely on in court - do you understand?" By law you **DO NOT HAVE TO SAY ANYTHING**, either now or later!

- Your outer clothing may be searched by an officer of the same sex.

If You Witness an Arrest

- Write down the numbers of any officers involved.

- Note when/where arrested, the circumstances and any other info.

- If the police are violent try and take photographs or video.

- Later, you can support any people

arrested by going to the police station.

At the Police Station

- You have the Right to have someone informed of your arrest.

- You have the Right to consult the Police Codes Of Practice, which informs you of your rights. (Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984)

- You have the Right to consult a solicitor of your choice, at any time, free of charge. There is always a Duty Solicitor available at the station, although quality varies and they're often biased towards the police.

- You have the right to **REMAIN SILENT**, there is **NO** requirement to talk to the police. We strongly advise you to answer "NO COMMENT" to all police questions. 'Small talk' and questions are evidence gathering, designed to make you incriminate yourself. Don't write or sign any statement or police notebook, until you have taken legal advice. Try not to be intimidated!

- If you do decide to talk in interview or make a statement, only talk about your own actions and not those of others as it may incriminate them.

- If you say you are under 17, the police will inform a parent or guardian.

- The only information you need to give the police after arrest (but not before!) is a verifiable name and address, which they usually check via police records, the electoral register or by phoning/sending an officer around to the address given, to check with others that live there. You don't need to give a date of birth, but

it may delay your release if you don't, as this is their primary means of identifying you.

- You may be asked personal questions, such as height, schools attended, political beliefs, - **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO ANSWER!**

- You **DO NOT** have to sign anything, but if you do, make sure that you check the information is correct, and then draw a line under the last item so that nothing can be added later.

- If you want or need to see a doctor tell the police. (This is important if you have been injured during arrest, to get medical evidence).

- Within maximum 24hrs, but usually a lot less, you must be Released, Charged, Bailed or Cautioned. Think twice before accepting a caution, the police often use this when they have no evidence with which to charge you. It is also an admission of guilt and will stay on your record.

- They can take fingerprints, saliva/hair samples and your photograph, without your consent, only **AFTER** you have been charged (unless authorised by a Superintendent and relevant to the case). If you refuse, they can use 'reasonable force' to take fingerprints and saliva/hair sample, but can never use force to take a photo. Watch out for surprise photos!

- If you have any complaint, insist it's recorded on your custody record.

- Authorize the police and your solicitor to reveal information about your detention and welfare to legal support.

- Upon release you are entitled to the return of your possessions and to a copy of your Interview Tape and Custody Record.

- **LOCAL SOLICITORS:** Douglas & Partners 0117 955 2663

M20: Bristol actions against war, lies & capitalism

March 20 was a global day of action against war, a callout that originated at the World Social Forum meeting in India earlier this year (or was it late last year?). Global means everywhere, not just a token A to B national demo, and Bristol STW took an early initiative on this by calling a weekend of action in Bristol. Sadly the likelihood of this being repeated across the UK was destroyed by the national STW campaign calling yet another A to B demo in London.

Bristol STW events went ahead and included:

- A Friday night critical mass of 70 people that successfully stopped traffic in the city centre, but was ultimately blocked in by ridiculous amounts of cops at the bottom of Old Market (cops on horses, in vans, on cycles and on foot). However the anti-war message of the mass was muted by a lack of info to hand out to passers-by, which needs to be rectified in future.

- A Saturday city centre static demo, picket of the TA, and vigil, was only attended by 150 people in wind & rain, with lots of cops on standby.

- A Saturday night benefit, with Rob Johnson & Rita Lynch, raised much needed funds, and was much fun for the decent numbers who turned out.

In true Bristol style, other actions took place too, undertaken by informal yet highly organised direct action (DA) networks, and giving a clear message that Blair, Bush and the ruling class will not

have it all their own way! 2 petrol stations were locked down for several hours each; the TA premises in Whiteladies Road received an evening inspection that left them somewhat wrecked; and at least 40 billboards across Bristol were subverted with 'bloody Iraq 4 sale' messages. No arrests were reported.

“A day of action is not enough when you're confronted by total war”

These actions hit the politicians, and the big businesses cashing in on Iraq's misery, where it hurts – in the pocket, and in their media-lie profiles. The passive tactics of the national STW campaign have been shown not to work, for whilst a majority of people now believe the politicians lied and acted on behalf of the interests of big business, the fact is the war went ahead, Iraq is still occupied, and Iraqis are paying daily with their lives (and we pay with cut-backs and attacks on our freedom here). However, whilst direct

action is the only way left now, supporters of DA have to ensure that they also reach out to the wider public to explain their activities and analysis. Their spontaneity & ingenuity needs to merge with a political offensive to win hearts and minds. The SWP dominated national STW campaign has now become little more than a conveyor belt to bring recruits into the Respect Unity Coalition electoral campaign, a campaign that will fail as completely as the passive tactics as the national STW, and could lead to yet ever greater disillusionment with political involvement. It is the task of all freethinking, freedom-loving radicals to ensure this does not happen, by all means available.

By @clusters

direct action special

In November 2003, Ramzi Kysia of Voices in the Wilderness visited Bristol to talk about his experiences in Iraq. VitW was established with the aim of stopping the sanctions against the Iraqi people, and the project continues to try to give a voice to Iraqis since the outbreak of war. Ramzi was keen to make clear that neither project work as 'human shields' (as he put it, they do not guard infrastructure), instead they are concerned with making personal contact with Iraqis and document-

killed, three have had family members killed, three have been robbed at gunpoint, one beaten up and robbed at gunpoint and one international woman was chased by armed men wanting to kidnap her, but escaped.

Intrepid reporter disarms soldier

Despite this, the group in Baghdad continue to research and gather news stories, going into hospitals and interviewing patients and doctors, getting international colleagues to escort them into the US

Al Muajaha - The Iraqi Witness

ing life in Iraq. They encourage links between people from all over the world and Iraqi people, who have been isolated by thirteen years of sanctions. Ramzi is an American of Lebanese descent, and has worked with VitW for the last five years.

The Baghdad-Bristol Connection

Bristol Indymedia volunteers have been working with Ramzi (via email) since Spring 2003 to support 'al-Muajaha, the Iraqi Witness', an open publishing project based in Baghdad that has sprung up since the war began. The title, chosen by the young Iraqis, translates as "confrontation", in the sense of "to face up to something", without the aggressive connotations that the word might have in English. Thirty to forty Iraqis and about twelve 'internationals' manage production of a newspaper

compound to interview the occupiers within (ordinary Iraqis are not allowed into the compound). The kids in Iraq are obviously keeping their sense of humour: Ramzi told a story of going into the compound with one Iraqi friend who, when posing for a photo with the soldiers, quickly reached round, grabbed the soldiers gun and held it, grinning broadly, over his head for the photograph. On the subject of the US compound, Ramzi was clear that there are internationals in Iraq, supposedly there to help the Iraqi people, who have never been outside the perimeter fence, never met and spoken with Iraqis, but instead hide inside plotting the fates of the people they are too scared to meet.

Telling the world about Iraq, telling Iraq about the world



It is vital that we continue to support this project, both with funds and, as importantly, through keeping in contact – to remind those in Baghdad that their stories are reaching us and that we want to hear what they have to say. The years of sanctions have taken their toll on Iraqi confidence and pride, whilst here in Bristol it is easy to feel powerless in the face of global war and that "there is nothing we can do".

('internationals' being visitors from any other country) and volunteers in Bristol, after being introduced to the project by Jo Wilding, have been helping the Baghdad group to maintain a website which presents the content of the newspaper alongside articles posted from around the world.

Publishing against the odds

Since the war began, literally hundreds of supposedly independent papers have sprung up in Baghdad, virtually all with their particular religious, political or other bias. The al-Muajaha project is unique in trying to sustain an open publishing ethos – that anyone can contribute their story – and their commitment is all the more impressive when those working on it are experiencing such hardships. Of the relatively small group in Baghdad, since the start of the war one person has been

In answer to both of these, al-Muajaha has a value beyond simply implementing open publishing practices in Iraq, in that it is a way for us here in Bristol to show people in Iraq that their stories and experiences are important and to keep ourselves informed by those that are seeing it with their own eyes.

<http://www.almuajaha.com/>

Donations or enquiries to:

Bristol Indymedia, Greenleaf Bookshop, Box 7, 82 Colston Street, Bristol. BS1 5BB
(cheques payable to Bristol Indymedia)

Regular bristle contributor Jo Wilding returned to Iraq for the third time last November. She is currently working with an activist-performer group called Circus2Iraq. With other small grassroots groups, Jo is travelling around Iraq, and sending back regular reports that are uplifting, but also convey the grim reality of life there for ordinary Iraqis. Here are a few excerpts from her email diary

January 21st - The circus in the squatter camp at Al-Sha'ala

This was the camp I came to a couple of months ago. Marwa remembered my name when we arrived. I haven't stopped thinking of her since the last time, over two months ago, the bright, beautiful little girl who wanted to go to school and become a doctor. You ask the teenage boys whether there's someone in authority, because usually there is and it helps if you go to them first. Abu Ahmed, they tell you, without hesitation, and go to fetch him.

You tell him you're a bunch of clowns and would like to play with the kids for a couple of hours. He leads you to a patch of cracked earth with spiky plants here and there. A few of the men get shovels and hack out the thorny patches, scraping them out of the way, while the kids cluster around you, then you get them to help you pull a big red parachute out of its bag. Some of them hang back, bewildered, till the excitement sweeps them up and they grip the edges of the parachute, the littler ones lifted off the ground, bouncing with the shaking of the parachute, shrieking with glee as they help to turn it into a tent, rocking it and themselves and each other with the movement of their own bodies. The kids are getting a

lot of diarrhoea and other illnesses because there's an open lake of sewage in the camp. There are no toilets. They just dig pits and cover them over when they're full. They need a drain to take the waste outside the camp. As with the bridge, they've got a plan, but it would cost 500,000 Iraqi Dinars to dig it, cover it and pay some of the men to work on it.

24 Jan 2004 - The Drain

There was a tent up as we drove back into the camp at Al-Sha'ala: long and semi-cylindrical, open both ends, with people inside drinking tea, eating together on the ground or sitting against the walls drinking chai. It's a traditional Shia mourning tent for 2 month old Mariam. "She died of the cold", Abu Ahmed said simply.

It's been raining the last two days and the place is a quagmire of mud and shit, sluiced through the camp from the lakes it normally festers in. Barefoot and barely shod children waded through it with us, following Abu Ahmed to the spot where the pipes will go. They've managed to buy three 6m lengths of pipe, and need another three at 30,000 Iraqi Dinar each. It's not the full link up to the sewage system but it's the best available. The main expense is the machine to dig the ditches, at



Sanitation at Al-Sha'ara

500,000 Dinar for 2 days, because the ground is concrete and they can't realistically dig it with shovels. So the total cost for 120 families to build basic sanitation for themselves is about £300. We told Abu Ahmed we couldn't promise anything. If you can help us with it, please email.

It's not directly challenging the occupation. On the face of it it's nothing more than charity, although by

On the ground in Iraq

giving them the money we're empowering them to change their own environment and it's impossible to stand in that place, among the animal sheds they call home, and not help in any way possible, knowing that a drain will save some of their lives; knowing it, because there can be no doubt about it, on a day like today when the sewage is flowing freely past the funeral tent for the tiny girl. These are reconstruction projects from the people, without Bechtel, Halliburton and USAID, in solidarity with people who want health and education for their children and themselves. So in an indirect way, it is a challenge to the occupation and who knows what seeds we plant?

To find out more about Jo and Circus2Iraq, ways to get involved, and life in Iraq, check out:
<http://www.wildfirejo.org.uk/> and
www.circus2iraq.org

Bristol Anarchist Action was formed in the early autumn of 2003 specifically for young people (up to 26 years of age), because we can often feel intimidated in mixed age groups and end up at the bottom of an informal hierarchy. So we thought it better to keep it to a similar age group. As anarchists we are against authority, which means we believe that no one is better placed to make decisions about your life than you are. This is relevant to the issue of student fees, as a few

years ago the government was handing out grants to encourage people into higher education. Now low-income families are being priced out of higher education, simply because the government feels the need to steal peoples right to learn in order to further an economic programme which considers war a greater priority.

A third of our members are in local universities and are involved with student rights groups against this crap state of affairs. Other members are still in school and were actively involved with anti-war, anti-Bush and Blair actions, walk outs, leafleting etc.

Ok, so we did have to have a sentence or two on why BAA's so great and brilliant, I bet you're well impressed now eh?? No? Well ok, basically we want to make some improvements, stir this city up a bit, and with the New Year bring new actions. BAA isn't a front group for some tired old trotskyst sect who like to debate the history of their theology. We are actually just a bunch of young anarchos who don't really like the state of the city or the world and want something done about it and in the process have a bit of fun.

This year we'll be doing a few things such as:

- * Getting involved with local bands and organising benefit gigs
- * Linking up with other anti-authoritarian groups
- * Involving ourselves with squat collectives and free parties

ACT YOUR RAGE!

* Supporting local and national actions and protests

* A graffiti campaign to brighten things up and generally spread the message

(keep your eyes peeled)

- * Organising a national anarchist youth gathering in Bristol in the early summer time

This is just a pretty basic outline of what we're about and what you can expect from us in the near future, so if you think that maybe you agree with some of our views and want to know more then please get in contact!!!



**THE BOSSES
ARE THE PARASITES
NOT
ASYLUM
SEEKERS**

Anarchist Youth Network

<http://anarchistyouth.net>

Email:

Baa@anarchistyouth.net

Forums:

www.enrager.net/forums (then check out the "south west" section)

Website:

www.anarchistyouth.net

The constant erosion of job security continues apace, in Bristol and everywhere else. The old certainties of turn up on time, keep your nose clean, do your job and you can keep it for life - have gone. For many, wages are going down or becoming worthless. Overtime has become "voluntary" extra work.

The temp agency takes it's cut of 40% forever for the 10 minutes it took to phone someone.

Nobody likes this so why do we put up with it? Once upon a time, in a land not so far away, when a boss told "his" workers that they wouldn't be paid for overtime anymore, they would stop what they were doing and tell him to stuff it. It's not a hard equation: each hours work = more money. So what has changed about Bristol & Britain that makes us "volunteer" to work for nothing?

Many people are unhappy about this but they are just unable to do anything about it. The basic tools to prevent these abuses (trade unions, rights, popular knowledge about rights etc) are in retreat. Individuals capable of telling a boss he's wrong haven't disappeared, they are just incapable of transferring the benefits of their individual resistance to everyone else. Unions have taken such a beating they are barricading themselves in traditional big workplaces, where they are strong, and hoping the government will change the law to protect them.

We need our unions back and in every workplace! The only problem is that British trade unions don't have the ability (or will) to protect people in smaller workplaces with casual or unwritten contracts. What good is the GMB going to do for a McDonalds worker? What good is the TGWU going to do for an illegal immigrant packing shelves in a supermarket? The best these unions could do for individuals in those companies would be legal representation to defend their rights. As we don't really have any decent rights this is no good.

Direct-action is the only weapon capable of fighting back but the unions have forgotten the direct-action roots of their movement.

We in Solidarity Bristol are an anarcho-syndicalist group, which means we call for direct-action to be used by everyone to protect themselves at work. We need new unions in all those places the old ones won't touch using anarcho-syndicalist (i.e. direct-action) tactics. In some places this change is

starting to take place.

Recently on the London Underground, a depot of track workers (half are temps) formed a Workmates

Group - a club of workers inspired by anarcho-syndicalist ideas. They have already used direct-action to prevent management abuse and won.

McDonalds Workers Resistance is another group that uses direct-action in a firm that has no job security and crushes all attempts at unionisation. Direct-action is the only weapon capable of beating McDonalds!

We would like to see these types of groups spread, as we believe they are the only weapon capable of confronting and beating bosses in firms where there are no rights, no contracts and no job security. To contact us for further information about Workmates Groups, direct-action unionism, support or advice you can write to: Solidarity Bristol, Box 43, 82 Colston St, Bristol BS1 5BB. Solidarity Bristol is part of the Solidarity Federation which is part of the International Workers Association www.direct-action.org.uk and www.solfed.org.uk



WORK RATE TOO FAST
(APPLY RESISTANCE)

The Bristol Anti-Casualisation Campaign (BACC) can help you fightback on the problems of casual work. Plans are afoot for an alternative event during 'Temporary Worker Week' in Bristol, from 17 - 22 May. Meet on the last Monday of the month, 8pm at the Old Fox, Fox Rd, Easton. Make contact, and get a copy of the occasional Casual Times news-sheet. They are also at Box 43, 82 Colston St, Bristol, BS1 5BB. Or email: bristolacc@hotmail.com

Bristol city centre is about to get a new development – whether you like it or not – a grandiose £500 million scheme providing all the things that Bristol does not need. This masterplan has been bulldozed through local groups, the democratic process, and will shortly (August 2004) begin bulldozing through the effected communities themselves. What is most shocking about this whole affair, is the manner in which the very institutions – the council and the local press – who are supposed to be there to protect us from such destruction, have rolled over and offered Bristol's heart on a platter for the London money-men to enjoy at their leisure.

The Developers

The consortium is composed of Land Securities, Hammerson, Henderson Global Investors (all London based), along with Morley Fund Management (from Basildon, Essex), under the misleading title of 'Bristol Alliance'. One writer on Bristol Indymedia

The Fixers are called in

The developers need to ensure the PR process of such a major development goes without the potential hitch of, say, the local people not wanting their benign assistance. They have turned to London based Opinion Leader Research, who proudly proclaim they: "help to turn audiences into advocates". Officially, OLR are there to consult communities about what they want. If you read their blurb, you will soon discover consultation is only one service on offer, another is persuasion, an art they claim to excel at. OLR have detailed methods involving 'protagonists'. These are, "persuasive people, skilled at encouraging others to adopt their point of view."

Consultation or Social Engineering?

You might reasonably ask, 'who's point of view do they seek to represent? Joe and Jane Public? The affected communities?' The answer lies in a report entitled 'Benefits to Business': "We utilize protagonists to provide public and private organisations with research

Welcome to the Plunder-dome

joked: "It is nothing to do with Bristol allying to anyone...This is not development, its plunder. It's the Imperial Alliance."

All developers claim good intentions, but it is not surprising people are sceptical of their real aims. Such scepticism is not unjustified when the property director of another developer working in Bristol, Quintain Estates and Development Plc, writes to the government-sponsored Barker Review of Housing Supply stating why they wish to limit affordable housing: "large numbers of affordable housing tenants, particularly social renters who are predominantly on housing benefit, would not help the economic performance of the restaurants, bars, cafés, cinemas in the area....We believe that high levels of affordable housing on mixed-use development are to be avoided and, wherever possible, affordable housing should be targeted at economically active households." Such statements make developers sound more like a profit hungry behemoths, than the selfless architects of community prosperity they like to appear as.

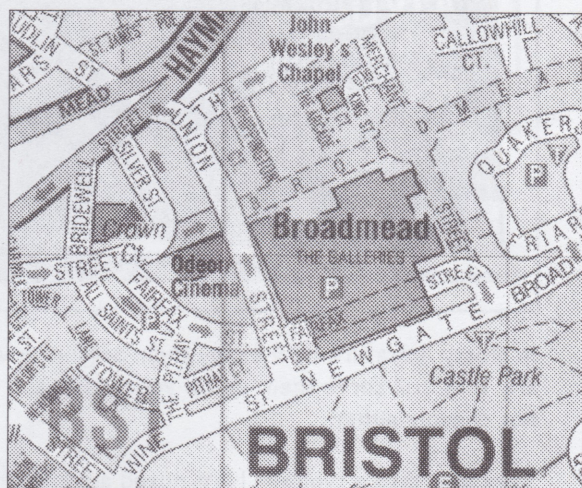


that informs them on the public mood. Protagonists evaluate information and are integral agents in passing on the opinions that spread throughout communities." All these plans and strategies provide a very different perspective from the developers spin that the consultation is benign and unbiased: "The proposals have been developed following extensive consultation over the past 3 years involving members of the public from Bristol, the City Council and a robust, representative sample of local people, business and special interest groups." They do not mention that St.Pauls Unlimited, on 25th June 2003, dissolved their sub-group working with the developers, unhappy about the process and where it was going.

The Failure of Local Democracy

All these techniques for engineering opinion would come to nothing if people, though their elected councillors, said 'no'. There was certainly a significant group of local people who opposed the current development plan. One local resident, participating in the democratic process, emailed 4 councillors to request a delay to the decision, but found a wall of silence, only 1 replied. "I'd emailed to ask them to delay the development - I'm not

saying I am 100% against it, but I felt this huge scheme was being pushed to fast - we just didn't have time to take it all in."



The vote in favour was almost unanimous with the local Ashley councillor abstaining (but not having the guts to vote against it!). The Bristolian takes up the story: "Despite some truly excellent and well researched and passionate contributions from St.Pauls residents at

local independent shops, and the local community trashed. Any compensation paid to the area by the developers is likely to be swallowed by quangos such as the South West Regional Development Agency or squandered on poverty professionals, just like the Community at Heart scheme.

No Future

A sad reflection of the bankrupt council policy and greed of developers is that the only solution offered to St.Pauls is gentrification. Nobody wants to live in a crack-infested area, but now the strong community that has weathered the storms and upheavals of Bristol's history is in danger of being swallowed up by property speculators cashing in on the latest 'evolving' city centre. This type of development all too often makes the rich, richer. In 2002 property consultants Frank Knight stated that those taking advantage of Bristol's 'lower' prices (compared to other 'evolved' cities) were going to be doing very nicely - further proof that those fuelling the yuppie flat

The Broadmead Development

tonight's planning meeting the council ignored them all in favour of Land Securities scheme which will bring pollution and traffic chaos to St.Pauls. A packed public gallery listened as opponents of the scheme won all the arguments and Land Securities suited executives could only squirm as the total inadequacy of their much vaunted 'consultation' was revealed for all to see. One Land Securities hot and bothered executive said: "The scheme is intended to increase the hierarchy in Bristol" to widespread laughter. It was revealed that only 5% of the housing will be affordable and 95% apartments for yuppies - contrary to all guidelines which recommend 30% affordable housing." Next time politicians scratch their heads and ask why so many people don't vote - I suggest looking at this pathetic example of democracy in action.

Enter the Plunder-dome

Debate has raged as to whether this development is a good thing - some locals support it hoping it will alleviate the drugs & crime problems in the area. But there are real fears it will do more damage than good - traffic problems, new corporate retail giants bankrupting

bubble are speculators, doing nothing to solve Bristol's housing problems and everything to exacerbate them.

Discerning Occupiers

Hammersons, of the Imperial Alliance, are no strangers to accusations of putting profit over people. They are part of another consortium locked in a 14-year struggle over the development/destruction of Spitalfields Market, London. Opponents of this scheme call it, "...plans of grotesque imagining.." that will destroy a historic and vibrant community. The opposition comes from local activists, church and mosque groups, as well as local businesses. The developers claim it's: "master-planned to accommodate the workplace and lifestyles of the world's most discerning occupiers.." Which begs the question - are you a discerning occupier - can you afford the hundreds of thousands of pounds needed for a roof over your head - or are you just a potential obstacle to the London money men and their plans for profit?

(this article, along with references can be found on <http://anarchist606.blogspot.com>)

Fresh & Wild ...about profits

By MH&N

Organic supermarket chain Fresh & Wild opened their seventh shop, and first outside London, at The Triangle in yuppie Clifton on December 8th. On January 26th

bristle contributors broke the news on Indymedia (see http://bristol.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=12276) that Fresh and Wild had just been taken over by Whole Food Markets Inc, the world's largest organic & whole food-chain, for \$38 million. As that article demonstrated this was no surprise, given Fresh and Wild's owners previous links to the north American organic sector, and their previous prof-

its made from buyouts and the like.



Subsequently, some have said we should not criticise Fresh

and Wild, that with their organic credentials they are better than Tesco, Sainsbury or ASDA. But that is a non-argument, it fails to recognise that Fresh and Wild are just another firm run for profit, who are seeking to capitalise on one sector of the food market which is ripe for plundering. In this case the organic sector which is worth £1 billion in the UK alone, and growing.

Fresh and Wild are not some cuddly local collective, they are big business. Prior to opening in Clifton they sought to poach Bristolians with knowledge of the local organic sector from existing organic shops. They have cynically set up shop in middle class Clifton because that is one of the areas of Bristol with a wealthy population who can afford their exorbitant prices, and are likely to fall for their pseudo-caring image. They claim to be 80% organic, but are not vegetarian, selling all sorts of expensive meats & fish. Despite extolling

subvertisement



in glossy literature how happy their organic cows are, they still serve them up on your plate, and not cheaply either.

They also take a typically hard-nosed attitude to their staff, up to half of whom are part-time, and earning as little as £5.50ph. Staff are called 'Team Members' and conned into the corporate trap of thinking they are all in it together, but it's only their bosses who profit when the firm is sold.

Unionisation is not encouraged. bristle spoke to Rosie, who applied for a job at Fresh and Wild: "I've a lot of experience working in North American organic stores, so I went along to one of their corporate recruitment days, which was filled with lots of silly teambuilding games. They seemed really disorganised and they had no systems set up. After my interview, I was told they would ring me in a couple of days if I got the job, but I had to chase them to find out if I'd been successful, and was then later told, by a different person, that the rate of pay was only £6 ph, instead of the £7 ph they suggested I might get during the interview. None of this was confirmed in writing. By the time they finally got around to arranging any training, I'd found another job for slightly better pay."

We all want to eat healthy food free from GM and pesticides, and for the average person that means making sacrifices to afford it whilst food remains a capitalist commodity. But rather than lining the pockets of yuppie firms like Fresh and Wild, we can support local community based organic shops, farms and collectives. We can also get together with friends to bulk buy, or maintain communal allotments. Organics yes, profit motive no!

subvertisement



What a shocker!

- St Paul's squatter ignored by City Council

By Mantxo

For many months, the St Paul's community has witnessed the injustice suffered by a resident of the area since he moved to Bristol from London in 1985. 'Spider', aged 67 years, has been living on the green in the centre of St Paul's since being evicted from his home nearby last Spring. At first he slept in a hammock hung between two trees on the green, and afterwards in a caravan. The green is central to this community and his caravan had to move for carnival. After carnival the caravan was back! Spider and his caravan are a statement against the injustice of this system, and the incompetence of its institutions - in this case Bristol City Council (BCC). The position couldn't be better - it faces the construction of the new St Paul's education centre, next to the BCC housing office for the district.

Incompetence from BCC? Injustice from the system? Yes! Spider has been a victim of the psychiatric system, from forced medication to 'two attempts of kidnapping', and destruction of private property including medical and other records. And then eviction! Talking to him you realise that he has no mental health problems, at least when you take into consideration the depression and damage resulting from his experiences. I didn't know how true all this was, but when he played me his tapes I realised the extent of the injustice - his eviction has been acknowledged by BCC as a mistake, an apology was made on local radio too. But Spider still remains homeless.

BCC allege it's difficult to justify a 3-bedroom house for a single man like Spider, but his was a familyhouse (his son & partner lived there). It was his house and he needs it back. What is BCC playing at? BCC agreed that compensation should be paid but nothing has

been done. Spider lost all his possessions in the eviction, and his papers and lost savings from the hostel where he was provisionally placed. This meant he had to leave the hostel, despite having no other home to go to. He has now spent a whole winter on the green, with no electricity, water, nor heating, except for what he has provided for himself.

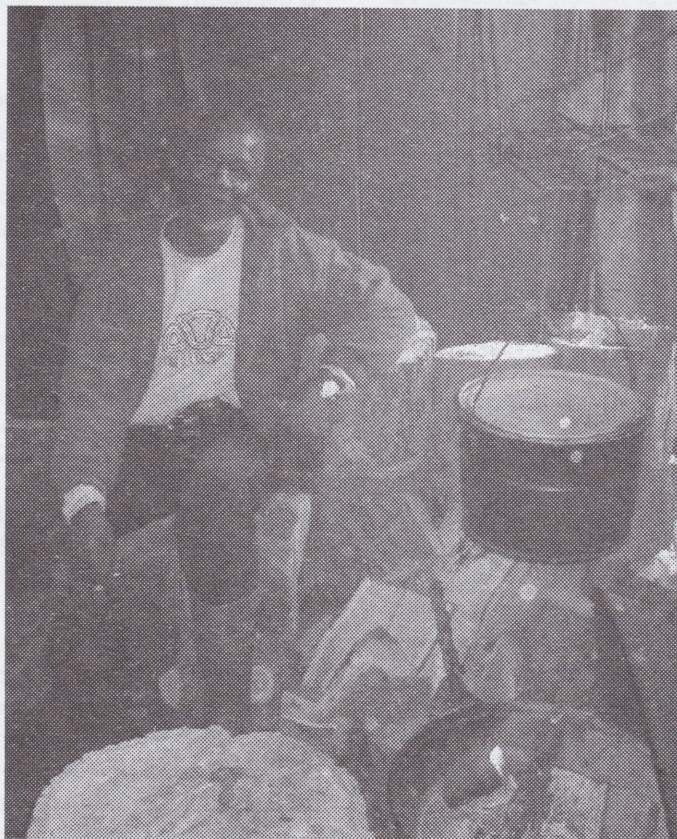
For many, the fact Spider has squatted the green in his caravan for so long is odd, especially if you recall the repression that travellers and squatters usually face. It's odd the authorities continue to do nothing - there are few green spaces in this community, they wouldn't allow something like this to happen in Clifton! It's only when you know the implications of the case and the confessed guilt of BCC that you see why he's difficult to move on. It could be too much for the community, with all the other things going on locally! There are groups supporting him, and a constant flow of people visiting. But perhaps due to the scale of the problem, and what he has managed to do

by himself to reclaim his rights, he lacks a more organised campaign. Come by and support him!

Spider believes this situation is just another episode in a life of continuous injustice. This goes back to when he was a kid in Jamaica, growing bananas so they could be eaten in England. He sees the roots of the problems are colonisation and slavery. Spider dislikes politicians and religions - they are just created to fool people, for the benefit of a few. "My religion is Earth", he repeats, "I'm in the Earth, I belong to Earth", and

he continues by explaining that borders mean nothing to him. If Spider is inspiring to many it's because his situation is a consequence of disagreeing with the established rules and power structures, and because he has not ended up in a hostel or drunk in the streets like many others - that he agrees are victims of the system just as he is. He has built a home with scrap and furniture he has found - a demonstration of possibilities and imagination. By doing so, he has shown how capable and solid he is. Eviction was due on 28th April.

For more info on issues relative to this case see *bristle 15 (Housing)*, *bristle 13 (Mental Health)* and *bristle 10 (Community)*.



The return of the Bristolian Party

Little has been heard from the Bristolian Party (BP) since it failed to win a council seat in May 2003, with the Bristolian news-sheet absent from our streets. But with the Lawrence Hill ex-LibDem councillor John Astley having resigned in disgrace, the BP is revving up to contest the by-election on May 20th. Earlier this year, *bristle* spoke to Julian Weston, BP party leader and candidate for Lawrence Hill, and one of Easton's better pub landlords. We started by asking him to respond to some criticism of the BP from Bristol Indymedia's newswire (see box):

JW: Well when you are fighting an election campaign you have to be confident of winning something. As for the Bristolian, people don't appreciate how difficult it was to keep it going with a circulation of 15,000, done on the back of 20 people, mainly on distribution. After getting involved in the election, which was like a rollercoaster, taking up lots of energy & resources, come May 1st we were exhausted and funds had run out. We took a step back to enjoy the summer, and we'll be back bigger & better in May. (Editors note: The Bristolian will be back bi-weekly from May, in A3 folded format, costing 20p, with an initial print run of 2-3000).

b: Apparently the Bristolian news-sheet, edited by Ian Bone, is a distinct entity from the Bristolian Party. As last year's local elections approached those around the Bristolian thought it'd be fun to have a shot at them as the best thing they could honestly do. But to stand on the reputation of the news-sheet, and it's name, they had to officially form the Bristolian Party, or otherwise stand as independents. The Bristolian Party doesn't exactly have a membership structure, partly to avoid the risk of it being 'taken over', but is based around those involved in the Bristolian for a long time, relying on supporters to help with the workload. Forming the Bristolian Party and the election campaign was a hectic 6 weeks.

JW: It was an awful lot of work and we're the first to admit we made a lot of mistakes, with some successes. We'll be much wiser and fight a better campaign next time. A big mistake was to have too many candidates (12 stood), some were less than suitable, but we were desperate to cover as many wards as we could. With retrospect that policy wasn't so good. We're looking forward to the by-election as I can put the full force, of the somewhat trimmed down Bristolian Party, towards the one ward. Another thing that came across was the misconception that the Bristolian Party was just about people born & bred in Bristol, when in fact it's for anyone living in Bristol regardless of where they come from, it's representing everyone. One candidate was from Essex, and a couple from London.

b: It is clear the Bristolian Party see themselves, small and young as they are, along with say the Greens, as the opposition to the LibLabCon coalition. But is voting the only way to achieve radical change?

JW: No obviously not. It's part of the process though. We were very proud, we seemed to be causing a lot of people to register to vote for the first time. The Bristolian Party is a very multi-faceted organisation, there are some widely differing views and people are free to express those views.

b: But doesn't voting disempower people by discouraging them to act for themselves?

JW: I'd say it depends who you vote for! We have to be honest in this. If I get elected in Lawrence Hill how much difference can I make, I'll be one amongst 70 odd councillors. You have to look and understand what is going on there, you have to consider peoples views and put them forwards as best you can.

b: The Bristolian Party, and the news-sheet, feel they are articulating peoples dissatisfaction with the council and using their position as candidates (or councillors if elected) to shake things up and raise issues that are presently ignored. Of course back in May 2002, in Easton, the Vote Nobody campaign garnered lots of interest, and had the support of many involved in the Bristolian news-sheet, including Ian Bone. That campaign said vote Nobody, because Nobody cares. Now the Bristolian Party is saying vote for us?

JW: I wasn't involved in that campaign but I can quote Ian, I think he said in the Venue "that about 15 people voted Nobody." It was something that was tried as a protest, it was quite a good campaign I think that captured some peoples interest, but on the day not a lot of people supported it. But rather than saying oh well that's it, you carry on and try something else.

b: So if people vote Bristolian Party, is that a protest vote or is the Bristolian Party a political party with a long term strategy for change, more than 'return Bristol to Bristolians'?

JW: There's no instant gratification in politics, we're quite realistic about that. Another criticism during the election was that we didn't have a manifesto, that our policies were quite diverse. Within 6 weeks it's quite hard to come up with a manifesto, although you don't have to have one to stand. I'd like to think its both things, it's a vote for a minor party, it's a protest. But as it grows, as the Bristolian Party changes and

evolves, we're not the same kind of organisation as we were last year. When the Bristolian returns it's going to look quite different. One of the stands we're making here is the 3 major parties, with whip systems and whatever, is not the only way forwards. I'd like to think the Bristolian Party can grow into a real alternative for Bristol, but it's not going to happen instantly, we have to keep pushing.

b: Last year the Bristolian Party got an average of 8% in the wards it stood in, with 15% in Easton. Although it still has no clear manifesto, or statement on its website, since then it has been working on its policies, and meeting every 2 weeks. So what can it offer?

JW: We are still formulating policies. But we are looking to increase to 50% the amount of affordable housing required from any property developer. Locally, we want to reunite the communities of Easton & St Pauls, by having the M32 covered over, put a lid on it. Millions of pounds was dumped into these areas to destroy them, let's see investment going back in to undo the damage that was done in the 1960's. On empty property & second homes, we'd like to see double taxation not a discount, we believe people have a right to use these as places to live in if needed. We totally support the poor people being booted out of the prefabs, we can't see why when a lot are elderly they shouldn't be allowed to live in peace & quiet rather than being evicted, if they are sub-standard they can be repaired, and replaced when people move and they become vacant. The city centre is an obvious one, what has everyone in Bristol been saying – they want to see it opened up. Millions of pounds have been wasted there. Let's just get on with the job and find a way to do it.

b: The Bristolian Party has its own 'think tank', but internal democracy makes policy formulation slow. One can't imagine what their discussions on a council budget will be like! Public transport figures large in their thoughts, as does improving local communities. On issues such as crime, anti-social behaviour, prostitution, rent arrears etc, they take a fairly standard 'left' view that people's socio-economic conditions cause many of the problems. Evicting families for rent arrears, for instance, is opposed quite rightly because that only creates further problems. The Bristolian Party is also critical of the 'poverty professionals', sent in with large grants to solve an area's problems, and believes local people should be more involved and empowered to resolve the problems. With all these topics, the detail of their policies will make interesting reading. One last policy question, what about the cops?

JW: We've got no problems with the police. A lot of them read and appreciated the Bristolian. They have their problems, and bad pennies, but in general they've got a difficult job that they do pretty well and

impartially. I'd like to see more working with the police to address neighbourhood issues, there's room for improvement because things are going wrong. Let's face it, if you get attacked, or burgled, then whatever your political views, you are gonna call the police.

b: So there we have it. The Bristolian Party, both protest vote and serious political party. Only time will tell if they can avoid the pitfalls associated with engaging with the electoral process, and retain their spikiness. They will though be more fun than the rest.

Comment on The Bristolian on BIMC 28/11/03
(http://bristol.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=9958&group=webcast)

Bristolian to win Lawrence Hill?

Now where have we heard this before? Oh yes, in The Bristolian, issue 82, 14/4/03, under a piece headed 'Swingometer goes Bristolian Crazy', it was claimed "The Bristolian Party has been confident of winning Filwood, Windmill Hill, Bedminster, Easton and Lawrence Hill for some time....". Elsewhere in the same issue the Bristolian claimed its candidate was indeed poised to take Lawrence Hill. But then of course reality kicked in, and The Bristolian won, er, zero seats.

To those of us who have listened to the Bristolian leader's extravagant claims over the years this may have come as no surprise, however to others it may have come as a huge disappointment. Those same disappointed punters may indeed be wondering whatever happened to The Bristolian – have we been had? A couple more election related issues, then silence, until a one-off special in October. Nothing like snatching defeat from the jaws of victory is there!

The tragedy is that The Bristolian was a very exciting agitational freesheet, for a while, but then it just got too caught up in its own success, and by becoming an electoral party ended up being part of the same circus it set out to expose, spinning its way to absurdity.

- this time its serious



Once you have tasted freedom you can never go back. Though some will fall by the wayside - imprisoned, addicted, dead by their own hand, beaten down by poverty or the system we will spend our lives fighting - and others will be waylaid by the daily grind, trapped the world of the nine to five, you can never shake off the memory. Always there will come a moment - staring into the face of boss, warder, looking up to see the great public secret of private misery suddenly written across the faces of your fellow passengers as you stumble bleary-eyed through the morning's commute or catching a glimpse of fresh graffiti sprayed on familiar walls, the smile on the face of a lover or stranger - when it will all come flooding back. So we will be reborn, turning to face the world anew, with anger in our hearts and our dreams held tight in our pockets.

That's how I feel now, looking at you. Seeing the age and the beauty written in the lines that crease your face as you smile I can't help but look beyond you, watch the years stretch out to contain all those people we loved and fought beside. But I'm getting beyond myself, so let's freeze the frame, wind the film back through the camera to the point where it all began, pull in closer, squeezing the shot tight then let it all run forward once again.

It's a spring morning, one of the first, so fresh you could swear you could smell a new world coming, the grey solidity of winter melting into air. We are hurrying along some half built road, flanked by anonymous warehouses, the circulatory organs of consumerism. The two of us huddled amidst a clutch of our friends, neighbours, comrades, a group rapidly swelling into a mass as others join us, appearing from side streets and alleyways. From somewhere we can hear the cry of sirens sweeping in from the far distance and the crowd quickens its pace. Then we start to jog as we catch a

glimpse of blue and a yellow that fluoresces somewhere in front of us, wheeling into a vacant patch of land, clambering over a metal crash barrier and suddenly we are there.

It's a newly built motorway embankment still covered in dirt, fresh from its construction. Ahead of us is a slip road, and a few cops piling out from a riot van, desperately flinging themselves into a thin line across the road. Beyond them lies the motorway, barely troubled by traffic at this hour and the future stretching out before us as fresh and as clean as this day itself. We seem to pause here for the briefest of intervals then the crowd breaks, and running before it, hand in hand, the two of us.

That's it, freeze the frame again, right there. In seconds the world will have changed forever, the line of cops swept aside by the crowd as it surges forward, the motorway emptying out before it, but keep it paused, there it is, the moment that the future gave to us.

We hit the tarmac scarcely a shadow's length in front of those that follow us. Ahead I can see police nervously fingering their batons, calling into radios far too late. I look across to you seeing that same mixture of fear and anticipation, like fire in your eyes. So I did all that I knew how to do and took you in my arms. As we kiss I can hear the click and whir of cameras from the embankment behind us, freezing this moment, the two of us silhouetted against the line of cops, spooling it into the future. In the hours, days, years to come it will be found on websites, revolutionary tracts, t-shirts, copied, stencilled on walls, degraded on a thousand photocopiers, till it becomes a shape that is more icon than image, and we will disappear into history. I can still taste you on my lips though and once we had tasted freedom we were never going back...

Sometimes getting started is the hardest step to take, we put barriers in the way so we are able to abort the mission at the first hurdle: its a wet night/day, I'll be working on my own, I'm skint, no one will be interested in the outcome anyway, I feel shagged out, I'm working tomorrow

headed. Go hell for leather, kick the ball into touch, start a small war. Test the ground, see if the corporations or authorities squirm? To get a grip on a situation take bite sized chunks you can chew off, grind the bastards down. Some actions will shock and spiral off on their own tangent – fuelled by

Imaginative Dreams Applied to Fuel the Movement's Potential

and what happens if I fuck up and get nicked and of course there's I promised my partner that night would be an early one - can't be sure how long it's going to take...been there.

outrage and paranoia. A sense of movement – yeah its happening – you might start looking over your shoulder, perspire every time you see the cops, not want to sleep in the same house two night running, jump every time the phone rings.

So my first step: work out the enemies of my freedom locally, so I now have my targets, maybe start with a couple of soft ones to build up confidence. So now you have focus can you encourage like minded people, not necessarily friends to channel their energy and collectively set your sights on some kind of a campaign e.g. McDonald's Huntingdon Death Science, etc. Questions about a campaign are: is it winnable or at least will it put a sizeable dent in their armour for the effort we are going to. Either it will be a lot of small actions in a short space of time which are obviously connected (yes there is a risk factor to pencil in)

or there is large damage or exposé, use wild imagination. It may be difficult or challenging – but this is what shapes us “nobody said it was going to be easy” (Cold Play). You could be spectacularly unpleasant without having to take a body count.

A group with a plan of a short life to take a name “the not-so content folks”, throw the lot in, be pig-



Don't trouble yourself with the likes of 'will we be popular?', who cares if we are liked? Belief is everything, if you have it “smile” spiritual brothers and sisters. If we are not getting any shit from any direction what are we doing wrong? Are we treading too carefully? Be careful circle-A's stand still too long and a stencil artist like Banksy might creep up on you and use you as a canvas.

Try and get your teeth into an unofficial campaign. It could be one of hate, ridicule, retain a sense of humour it's what we British are supposed to be famous for. Your imagination should be able to run rings around

the cops. They can take as much acid as they like to get on our wave-length but to truly get on the right frequency they would have to ride the waves with the Jolly Roger flown high on the pirate radio galleon. Don't look for me on the barricades, I won't be there. Focus on the difficult, the unpredictable, recognise the potential!

Subhumans

The Subhumans. Bristol Bierkeller. Jan 30.

Bearded, forty-year-old men in leather jackets stumble drunkenly around in search of their lost youth or a bit of cottaging in the gents, as half naked, haunted lepers wailing in the eternal torment of their soul drift by. Yes, It's a Subhumans gig, though the uninitiated might think they've wandered into a Hieronymous Bosch painting come to life. This was a benefit gig to raise funds for a new p.a. to replace one stolen from a Severed Head of State gig in Easton many moons ago. Are you keeping up? Dick Lucas and a punk rock army of volunteers and all-round good people arriving like the cavalry and proving that words such as community, scene and mutual-aid are still relevant and valid in this age of cynicism, selfishness and quarrel. The Subhumans are punk and punk is The Subhumans. Reality is waiting for a bus and our society? What a drag! Our society what a fucking drag!! Riot!!! John Serpico.



Monica Sjoo

Trance-formation: Monica Sjoo at the Temple of Sulis

In February, Bath's Hotbath Gallery was host to a major retrospective of the work of Monica Sjoo, entitled 'Through Space and Time the Ancient Sisterhoods Spoke to Me'. Organizers Stacey Crawshaw, Sheila Broun and Maggie Parks found themselves confronted by an embarrassment of riches as they selected images from more than thirty years of Sjoo's artistic output. The exhibition was complemented by talks by Rae Beth (author of *Hedgewitch*), Sheila Broun, Maggie Parks, Jill Smith and Cheryl Straffon.

Monica Sjoo treated people who turned up on Saturdays to slide-show chats in which she explained how she felt like a medium for the symbolic imagery of her art and described the trance-like states of emotion in which it is created. As we sat back and listened it became evident that the paintings were always produced with a sense of wonder, that they frequently expressed much pain but were also often created with more than a twinkle of mischief. Sjoo's presence is as enchanting as her art and despite her illness, her life force remains undiminished.

In 1973 Sjoo gained notoriety with her controversial painting 'God Giving Birth'. As co-author of *The Great Cosmic Mother* (1987, with Barbara Mor) and contributor to the Freedom Press anthology, *Visions of Poesy*, Sjoo has been a long been a prominent voice in anarcha-feminism. This is reflected in her work in which art, spirituality, feminism and social-justice politics are seamlessly interwoven. A major work, 'Mother Earth in pain, Her trees cut down, Her seas polluted' (1996), for example, was inspired by the direct action campaign at Newbury where '14,000 trees were cut down to save motorists five minutes in their travelling time'.

Born in Sweden, Monica Sjoo has made Bristol her home for several years now. While Sjoo's work is profoundly internationalist in its breadth and approach, many images demonstrate her love for locality, particularly the West Country's own prehistoric landscapes around Avebury, West Kennet and Glastonbury. She deplores the encroachments of military bases on sacred landscapes at Aldermaston and Greenham, Wales and Wiltshire (one of England's most heavily militarized counties).

Personally I have some misgivings about the notion of Mother Earth which remains a controversial one among feminists. Critics such as Janet Biehl and Val Plumwood, for example, reject the essentialist and 'irrationalist' celebration of the female/nature; male/culture association as a construction of the patriarchal worldview that it seeks to challenge. This is neatly illustrated by political-montage artist Barbara Krueger whose 'We Won't Play Nature to Your Culture' (1983) depicts a woman with leaves over her eyes. However, there is no denying the persistence of Mother Earth across cultures, geographies and millennia. And Sjoo's work, with its bright and richly symbolic goddesses dwelling in sacred landscapes, reveals the most empowering and inspiring aspect of the metaphor. If you want to decide for yourself there is no need to worry if you missed the exhibition. There will be a further opportunity to see Monica Sjoo's work at the Create Centre, Bristol from the 2nd April.

Rob Newman

From Caliban to the Taliban - 500 years of humanitarian intervention Rob Newman @ Hen & Chicken, 29 November 2003

This nearly two hour stand-up show to a packed audience was a theatrical tour de force. Encompassing history lesson, political analysis, mimicry (his John Lydon was superb), song and dance, ranting, and the odd joke or two. Caliban refers to the word for black slaves, as used by Shakespeare in *The Tempest*, and derives from Columbus' invention of the word cannibal to describe natives he slaughtered at the start of 500 years of humanitarian intervention. Afghanistan and Iraq are of course the latest examples.

Showing an amazing memory for dates and facts, Newman fascinates and terrifies with his lesson about imperialism and capitalism, showing how history is rewritten to recuperate ideas and solidify power. If history was taught like this we'd all have a degree in it, and the world would be an infinitely better place. MH

The Economics of Freedom

**The Economics of Freedom, SolFed Booklets, 2003.
www.solfed.org.uk**

This is a short and easy to read pamphlet that takes a look at anarchist economics. It is in three main sections. Part one gives a critique of capitalism. Part two looks at the ideology of Libertarian Communism and part three looks at direct democracy and planning. In essence part one diagnoses the problem and two and three offer the solution. This is an important pamphlet, as 21st century anarchism lacks much serious economic analysis. This pamphlet is good on the critique of capital – with sections on the environmental and state welfare that underpins the so-called free market. However their discussion of the solution is way to thin to be anything more than an introduction to what needs to be a bigger debate.

Spearhead

Spearhead - Carling Academy, 2 December 2003

Spearhead put on their usual feel-good song and dance, playing songs old and new, to a relatively full house. Sadly, they've ditched the female back-up vocalists, but MC Radio Active acted as an excellent foil to Michael Franti's happy-go-lucky preacher of the positive. The show did suffer some of the call and response tedium that persists in hip-hop, but at least you get the impression Franti really cares if you're waving your hands in the air. He saved his anti-war, anti-Bush speech until the end to an appreciative, admittedly drunken, crowd.....power to the peaceful, indeed! NG

No Retreat

No Retreat - The secret war between Britain's anti-fascists and the far right. by Dave Hann and Steve Tilzey.

'In the late 1970's racism was on the march ... Their bootboys parading their extremist views and targeting ethnic minorities and political opponents ... until a group of working class left wing activists fought back. The squads were born' - 'No Retreat' does what it says on the packet. The emphasis here is on fighting back. Physically. Mostly told in the very accessible form of anecdotal stories of clashes with the fash, it feels like one big war-stories down the pub session. It's an entertaining and easy read. Amongst the tales of streetfighting there's also analysis of the history and issues. The effective anti-fascist strategy of both physical and ideological confrontation is well outlined. Mostly it's stories about rucking though! Set mostly in and around the authors' home town of Manchester, the book's split between two AFA members, so as one hangs up his Doc Martens after the late 70's / early 80's 'squad' days another takes up the story from the 1985 founding of Anti Fascist Action. "No Retreat" illuminates the dangerous world of frontline anti - fascism, and provides useful lessons for those who might be up for it. With its informal style, and stories of the master race being battered up and down Manchester, it's hilarious.

As with anything, the consumer's taste governs response. Some may contest its analysis and political conclusions. Others may doubt its sometimes triumphalist tone. The emphasis on physical confrontation may be off-putting for some. Pacifists won't like it. Neither will Nazis. That said, to my taste, it's a tale of courage in dangerous times, a hell of a story, told by real people. Inspiring stuff.

The following letter was recently received anonymously by bristle, we reprint it so that you, the reader, can make up your own mind about the claims made in it. This material may not be suitable for the easily shocked. Read on at your own peril...

Hello Bristle,

I found your mag in a recycling box, well I am writing to you after reading what you are about. I am a member of a group that operates in the SW area and around Bristol. We are sometimes on very pc using petrol guzzlers and fear and paranoia tactics. We placed our statement on Indymedia Bristol. We once got an article in the Evening Post after we scared John Hughes top man of mail marketing in Bedminster, using shite and a dead rat. He lived in Brent Knoll near WSM. Celia Luking was also visited a little while ago for the little she new about homelessness, safe in her house on the Port Way Rd in Shirehampton. If you hadn't guessed yet we would not be surprised, P.V.C. Peoples Vengeance Club. Anyone could have taken our name.

As a group, geographically and because of other commitments we were limited to about one visit a month. We were inspired by animal rights activists doing home visits on people connected to Huntingdon Life Science and the Baking Brigade (pie throwing) and the woman covering Blair with rotten fruit. We felt romantic about this very personal approach, the kiss of death, that very un-pc tongue at the back of the throat, whilst at the same time, roaming faceless and at large.

Stroud Valley Anarchists enquired about membership, we told them "you don't need a badge to start an orgy!". If you are one of those people who are unpleasent and like to throw your weight around in the S.W. then, yes., you have something to worry about. P.V.C. are in research mode at present. We don't mess with people's children so Helen Holland who lives near the Bristol City Ground, Ashton Gate, was lucky we chose not to kidnap the rabbits and guinea pigs, but the hidden ladder in the park was a must to be able to write out initials (P.V.C.) on the bedroom windows so it was readable when the curtains were drawn back in the morning.

So join us. Make the rich twitch.

Contacts

✪ Bath Earth First!

PO Box 426, Bath BA1 2ZD.

✪ Bath Hunt Saboteurs Association

PO Box 426, Bath BA1 2ZD.
07734 968414 bathsabs@fmail.net

✪ Bath Animal Action

PO Box 426, Bath 2ZD.

✪ Bath Stop the War Coalition

c/o 40 Kipling Ave, Bath BA2 4RB.
www.bathstopwar.org.uk
postmaster@bathstopwar.org.uk

✪ Bristle

Box 25, 82 Colston St, Bristol BS1 5BB.
www.bristle.org.uk editors@bristle.org.uk

✪ **Bristol Activists Forum** (Bristol Activists accepts posts on a wide range of political issues and events. To join send a blank email to: bristol-activists-subscribe@yahoo.co.uk)

✪ **Bristol Anarchist Action** (BAA) (youth anarchist group for under-25's)
www.anarchistyouth.net Baa@anarchistyouth.net

✪ **Bristol Anarchist Network** (BAN) (new group setting up to network among Bristol's anarchists and to publicise & disseminate anarchist ideas and action).
bristolanarchistnetwork@subsection.org.uk

✪ Bristol Animal Rights Network

Box 53, Greenleaf Bookshop, 32 Colston St, Bristol BS1 5BB. Bristolar@webtribe.net

✪ Bristol Anti-Casualisation Campaign (BACC),

Box 43, 82 Colston St, Bristol, BS1 5BB.
bristolacc@hotmail.com

Meetings: last Monday of the month, 8pm at the Old Fox, Fox Rd, Easton.

✪ Bristol Cycling Campaign

13 Alpha Road, Southville Bristol BS3 1DH. Meetings: first Thursday of the month, 8pm at the Scotchman & His Pack, St. Michael's Hill

✪ Bristol Defend the Asylum Seekers Campaign

Bristol Defend The Asylum Seekers Campaign, Box 41, Greenleaf Books, 82, Colston Street, Bristol, BS1 5BB
www.asylumbristol.org.uk/
asylumbristol@hotmail.com

✪ Bristol Genetix Group

6 The Manor House, Park Lane, BS2 8BE

✪ Bristol Housing Action Movement

Box 56, 82 Colston St, BS1 5BB.
Tel: 0795 725 4045

✪ **Bristol Indymedia** (submit your own news and use the calendar to list events)

<http://bristol.indymedia.org>
(Also UK Indymedia - <http://www.indymedia.org.uk>)

✪ Bristol International Solidarity Movement

Action and Resistance for Justice in Palestine
www.ism-bristol.org.uk/

✪ Bristol Permaculture Group

10-12 Picton St, Montpellier, Bristol BS5 6QA.
0117 955 3959
BSPermaculture@postmark.net
www.bristolfoe.org.uk/bpg/

✪ Bristol Prisoners' Support Group (ABC)

Box 42, 82 Colston St, Bristol BS1 5BB
www.geocities.com/bristol_abc/
bristol_abc@yahoo.co.uk

✪ Bristol Stop the War Coalition

Box 45, 82 Colston St, Bristol BS1 5BB.

✪ Chiapaslink

Box 79, Greenleaf Bookshop, 82 Colston St, Bristol, BS1 5BB
www.chiapaslink.ukgateway.net/
chiapaslink@yahoo.com

✪ Dartmoor EF!

PO Box 77, Totnes, TQ9 5ZJ.

✪ Easton Cowboys

www.eastoncowboys.org.uk
eastoncowboys@hotmail.com

✪ Eco-Village Network UK (EVNUK)

PO Box 1410, Bristol BS99 3JP
0117 373 0346

✪ **Enrager.net** (anarchist and libertarian newswire, with a wide range of discussion forums. South West Forums)

<http://enrager.net/web/britain/southwest>
To submit news/articles: <http://enrager.net/web/>

✪ Euskal Info (Basque Information)

PO Box 50, 82 Colston St, Bristol BS1 5BB.
www.euskalinfo.org.uk euskalinfo@kebele.com

✪ Greenleaf Bookshop

82 Colston St, Bristol BS1 5BB.
0117 921 1369

✪ i-Contact (alternative video network)

c/o 76 Mina Rd, St Weburghs, Bristol BS2 9TX.
0117 9400 636 www.videonetwork.org

✪ Kebele Kulture Projekt

14 Robertson Road, Easton, Bristol BS5 6JY.
0117 939 9469

www.kebele.org info@kebele.org

✪ Kiptik (Zapatista Solidarity Group)

Box 79, 82 Colston St, Bristol BS1 5BB.
www.kiptik.buz.org kiptik@eudoraimail.com

✪ Mapuche International Link

6 Lodge Street, Bristol BS1 5LR.
0117 927 9391
<http://www.members.aol.com/mapulink/>

✪ Marlon Thomas Campaign

Grosvenor Road, St. Pauls, Bristol.

✪ Pandora Project (DU)

<http://www.pandoraproject.org/index.html>
pduproject@yahoo.co.uk

✪ Set up for Life (Gary Mills and Tony Poole Campaign)

PO Box 4739, Birmingham B11 1LG
07814 793 530 setupforlife@hotmail.com

✪ South Devon EF!

PO Box 77, Totnes, TQ9 5ZJ.

✪ Solidarity Bristol (part of Solidarity Federation),

Box 43, 82 Colston St, Bristol BS1 5BB.
www.sofed.org.uk
mail@solidaritybristol.org.uk

✪ St. David's Wood Campaign (Direct action

against road building in South Wales)
Tel: 07708420446 (if no answer send text)

✪ Stroud Valleys' Anarchists

www.geocities.com/svanarchossvanarchos
svanarchos@yahoo.co.uk

✪ SWAN Network

PO Box 70, Newport, NP1 0YD
swangroup@yahoo.co.uk

✪ Totnes Genetix Group

c/o PO Box 77, Totnes, TQ9 5ZJ. info@togg.org

✪ Transform Drug Policy Foundation

Easton Business Centre, Felix Road, Bristol BS5 0HE.
0117 941 5810
<http://www.tdpf.org.uk/>
info@tdpf.org.uk

✪ Troops Out

PO Box 5, 82 Colston St, Bristol BS1 5BB

